

# **Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area**

## Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment 2002

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Left: The 1804 South Canaan Meetinghouse offers historic lectures and jazz concerts every summer

Right: Beckley Furnace, East Canaan, CT

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## Executive Summary

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The upper Housatonic Valley is noted for its picturesque landscape, the meandering Housatonic River, and traditional New England towns. Writers, artists, and vacationers have visited the region for 150 years to enjoy its scenic wonders, making it one of the country's leading cultural resorts. Encompassing 29 communities in the hilly terrain of western Massachusetts and northwestern Connecticut, the upper Housatonic Valley is considered by many to be the quintessence of a civilized, independent, and thoughtful retreat. Many visitors and residents alike, however, are unaware of the underlying history and culture that have shaped and been shaped by the landscape. The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area has been proposed in order to heighten appreciation of the region, preserve its natural and historic resources, and improve the quality of life and economy of the area.

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*"The Valley of the Housatonic, locked in by walls of every shape and size, from grassy knolls to bold basaltic cliffs—a 'Happy Valley' indeed! A beautiful little river wanders singing from side to side in this secluded paradise."*

Fanny Kemble, Actress, 1835

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The study area is the watershed of the upper Housatonic River, extending 60 miles from Kent, CT, to Lanesboro, MA. It includes 26 communities stipulated in the Upper Housatonic National Heritage Area Study Act of 2000; three communities that requested inclusion have been added. The Upper Housatonic National Heritage Area Study Act outlined eight criteria for evaluating the significance, suitability, and feasibility of the upper Housatonic Valley to become a national heritage area. Analysis of the upper Housatonic Valley in light of these criteria demonstrates that the area contains nationally important resources and represents important national themes. The upper Housatonic Valley is a singular geographical and cultural region that has made significant national contributions through its literary, artistic, musical, and architectural achievements, its iron, paper, and electrical equipment industries, and its scenic beautification and environmental conservation efforts. The only National Park Service unit in the area is the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, which runs the length of the valley.

In the process of researching this heritage area feasibility study, four heritage themes interpreting the region have been identified:

- CULTURAL RESORT—famed for writers Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Edith Wharton, W.E.B. DuBois, painters Norman Rockwell and Jasper Johns, sculptor Daniel Chester French, and the performing arts centers

of Tanglewood, Music Mountain, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Jacob's Pillow, and Shakespeare & Company, and the resort towns of Stockbridge and Lenox, MA;

- SHAPING A SCENIC LANDSCAPE—renowned for its scenic beauty and a long history of innovative nature conservation following the era of industrialization and deforestation;

- CRADLE OF INDUSTRY—region was a pioneer in the iron, paper, and electrical generation industries;

- REVOLUTIONARY WAR AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY—there were important events related to the Revolutionary War era, Shays' Rebellion, and early civil rights.

This collection of themes is not currently interpreted by other national heritage areas, so it would be suitable to designate the upper Housatonic Valley a national heritage area.

The feasibility study examined three management alternatives: (1) Continuation of Current Practices; (2) National Heritage Area; (3) Privately Organized Heritage Area. It was found that the alternative of a national heritage area would be most effective at accomplishing the region's goals for cultural and environmental preservation and education.

The national heritage area would complement the upper Housatonic economy, which is reliant on tourism, education, the arts, recreation, farming, and specialized manufacturing. A heritage area would enhance the quality of historical, cultural,

and natural attractions and increase connections among them. Heritage area goals expressed in the planning process include: strengthening the region's identity; increasing public awareness of local history and the need for preservation; encouraging research on local history and its incorporation into the educational curriculum; enhancing the quality of community character; controlling undesirable growth; improving the local economy, particularly in Pittsfield, MA; and renewing a sense of public "ownership" of the long-polluted Housatonic River.

The extensive citizen involvement in heritage activities and the existence of the nonprofit organization Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, Inc. (UHVNHA) make a national

heritage area designation feasible. The UHVNHA was incorporated as a private nonprofit organization in 2000 to create a formal vehicle for promoting a national heritage area. It has an active board and a broad membership including the region's municipalities and cultural, historical, environmental, civic, educational, and economic development organizations. There is a great deal of interest in the upper Housatonic Valley in establishing a national heritage area.

This study includes an environmental assessment of possible impacts related to the three possible alternatives. This assessment finds that the potential impacts are not significant, although additional visitors will contribute to the tourism economy.



Dairy herds graze on the rocky fields of Lakeville, CT

# Project Background

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## The National Heritage Area Concept

A national heritage area is a part of our country's landscape that has been recognized by the United States Congress for its unique contribution to the American experience. It has a distinctive history and geography, nationally important resources, and a story of broad interest to tell. It brings coherence and meaning to the complex history of a region.

Heritage areas may be developed around a common theme or industry that influenced the culture and history of the region. For example, in the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, the mills driven by waterpower represent the beginning of the early American industrial age. Many areas are associated with a large-scale natural resource such as a river valley or a cultural resource like a historic canal or roadway. Expressions of the region's heritage may be found in historic architecture, living folklife resources, scenic and natural features, and industries and products that have sustained the region's economy.

Often heritage places are such an integral part of the landscape that they go unrecognized and unprotected. Heritage areas recognize the impact of history on the evolving landscape and understand that conservation and economic development are interrelated. Heritage areas are "living landscapes," where the residents have formed partnerships with state and local government to celebrate their heritage and conserve irreplaceable natural and cultural resources. A heritage area may incorporate urban, suburban, and rural communities and cross state boundaries. Most heritage areas consist mainly of private properties, although some include public parks and preserves. Much of the maintenance of these lands is accomplished through nonprofit organizations and volunteers. Heritage areas do not have land-use regulatory powers.

Regions can use heritage areas as a vehicle for developing public-private support for preservation and investment. The process involves building partnerships that educate residents and visitors about the region, protect its natural and

cultural heritage, and enhance the economy through business investment, job expansion, and tourism. Heritage areas have resurrected a sense of "civics" in many areas. They have made people more aware of their communities and their history and have provided a vehicle for working together to improve their regions.

The creation of a heritage area usually begins with a grass-roots effort by residents, businesses, community and political leaders to protect, preserve, and promote the special qualities of their environment, history, or culture. To pursue federal designation, potential areas must undergo an evaluation of significance, feasibility, and suitability.

The federal legislation that officially designates a heritage area usually identifies a specific management entity that is expected to coordinate the activities of the heritage area, develop its management plan, and receive any federal funds provided by Congress. The NPS provides these organizations with technical assistance and support. If Congress designates a national heritage area, the next step is to develop a management action plan. This process helps residents of the proposed heritage area identify the significant features of their region and develop an action agenda to serve as a basis for community projects and programs.

## Legislative History

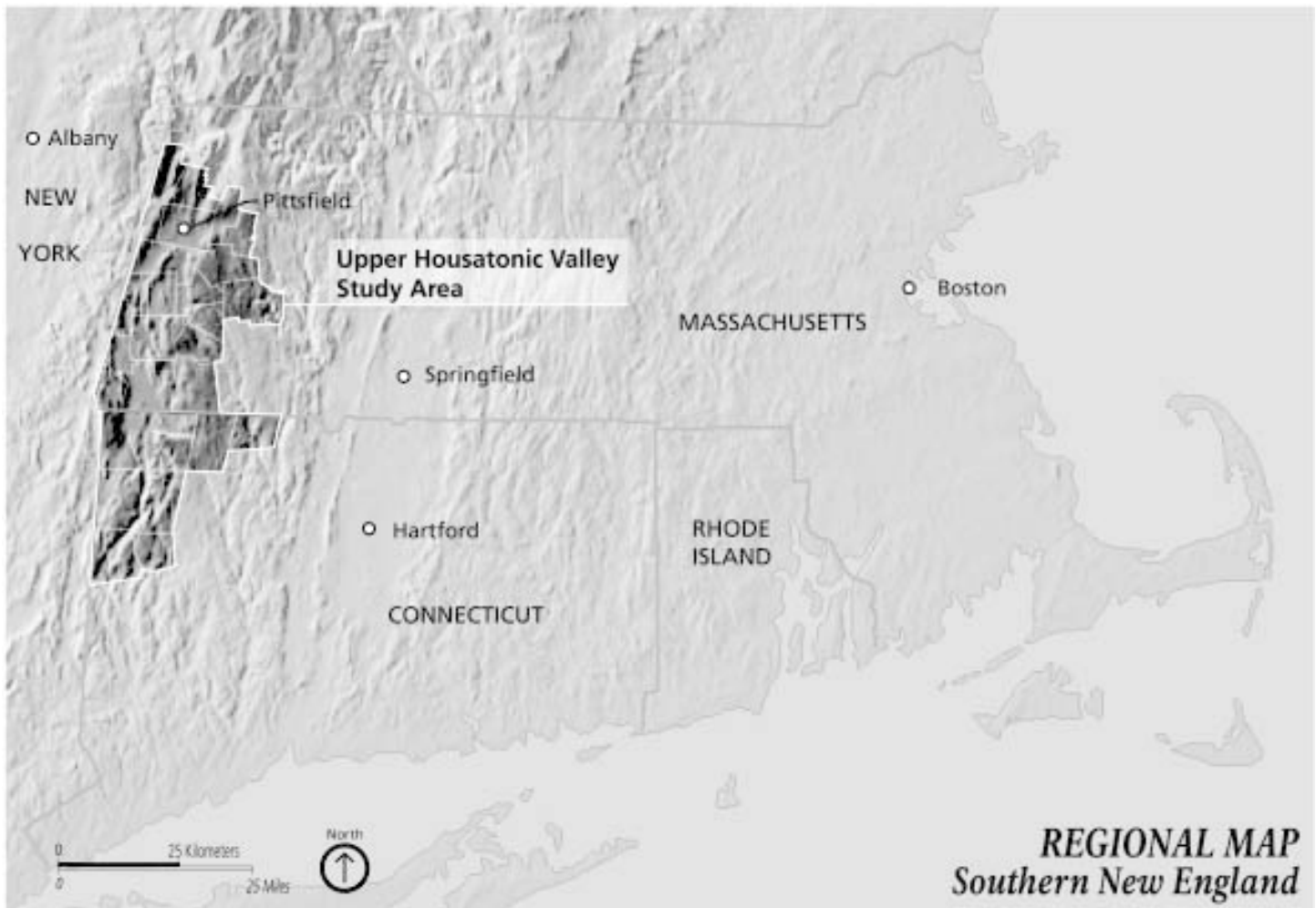
On November 9, 2000, PL 106-470 was signed into law, directing the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area in Connecticut and Massachusetts. The legislation was introduced by Representative Nancy Johnson (R-CT-6) in the House of Representatives and by Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) in the Senate and sponsored by Representative John Olver (D-MA-1), Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), Senator John F. Kerry (D-MA), and Senator Christopher J. Dodd (D-CT). The NPS was delegated responsibility for carrying out the study in PL 106-470, referred to as the Upper Housatonic National Heritage Area Study Act of 2000.

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### The Study Approach

The Upper Housatonic National Heritage Area Study Act of 2000 stipulates that the significance, suitability, and feasibility study shall include analysis, documentation, and determinations regarding whether the study area—

1. has an assemblage of natural, historic, and cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use, and are best managed through partnerships among public and private entities and by combining diverse and sometimes non-contiguous resources and active communities;
2. reflects traditions, customs, beliefs and folk-life that are a valuable part of the national story;
3. provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, historic, cultural, and/or scenic features;
4. provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities;
5. contains resources important to the identified theme or themes of the Study Area

that retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation;

6. includes residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and local and state governments who are involved in the planning, have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants, including the Federal Government, and have demonstrated support for the concept of a national heritage area;

7. has a potential management entity to work in partnership with residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and local and state governments to develop a national heritage area consistent with continued local and state economic activity; and

8. has a conceptual boundary map that is supported by the public.

After addressing these questions about the significance, suitability, and feasibility of establishing the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, this study compares the upper Housatonic Valley with other heritage

areas; presents management alternatives for preserving and interpreting the region's historical, cultural, and natural resources; and provides an environmental assessment (EA) of the impacts of the proposed options.

This study did not evaluate the upper Housatonic Valley as a potential unit of the national park system.

### **The Study Area**

The study area is the watershed of the upper Housatonic River, extending 60 miles from Kent, CT, to Lanesboro, MA. It comprises 848 square miles, including eight towns in Connecticut and eighteen in Massachusetts. (If three proposed towns are added it would add 116 square miles for a new total of 964 square miles.) The Connecticut towns are Canaan, Cornwall, Kent, Norfolk, North Canaan, Salisbury, Sharon, and Warren. The Massachusetts towns are Alford, Dalton, Egremont, Great Barrington, Hinsdale, Lanesboro, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Marlboro, Pittsfield, Richmond, Sheffield, Stockbridge, Tyringham, Washington, and West Stockbridge.

The Berkshire (MA) and Litchfield Hills (CT) that surround the watershed have helped shape a distinct regional culture and have provided natural borders for the proposed heritage area. The upper Housatonic Valley is distinct from the lower Housatonic Valley, which stretches from New Milford, CT south to Stratford, CT. The lower Housatonic is more urbanized and is connected to the Greater New York Area. The portion of the upper Housatonic Valley study area in Massachusetts is in the south and central parts of Berkshire County. The northern part of Berkshire County, including Williamstown, Adams, and North Adams, is within the Hoosic River watershed and is not included in the study area.

The regional planning agency for Berkshire County is the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, and the tourism industry is promoted by the Berkshire Visitors Bureau. The upper Housatonic Valley communities in Connecticut are located in Litchfield County. Their regional planning agency is the Northwest Connecticut Council of Governments, and tourism interests are promoted by the Litchfield Hills Visitors Bu-

reau. The upper Housatonic watershed has a long-standing research and advocacy organization called the Housatonic Valley Association.

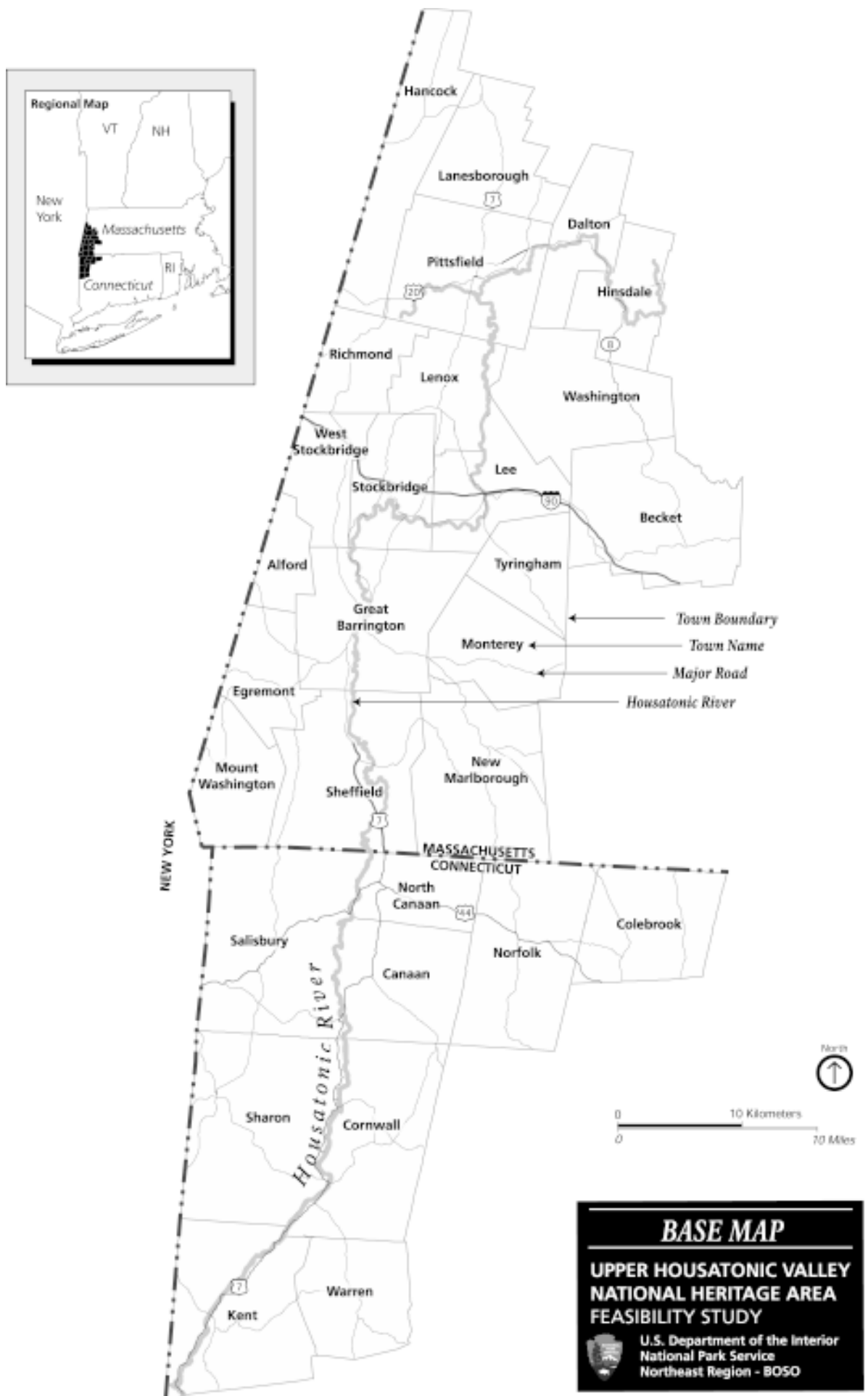
In the course of this feasibility study, several additional communities have requested inclusion in the study area. The towns of Becket and Hancock, MA, and Colebrook, CT, have requested that they be included in the proposed national heritage area. Portions of Becket and Hancock are located in the upper Housatonic Valley watershed. These towns have institutions that are thematically important to the rest of the region. The Hancock Shaker Village, on the Pittsfield/Hancock line, is a major museum of Shaker culture. The Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, in Becket, has been one of the leading summer dance festivals in the country since its founding in 1933. Colebrook, CT, is outside of the upper Housatonic watershed, but it abuts the watershed and has an iron industry heritage in common with northwestern Connecticut. The Colebrook Forge used iron ore from the Salisbury District and supplied tools for boring cannon for the Continental Army during the American Revolution.

### **Local Participation in the Study Process**

The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, Inc. (UHVNHA), has served as the feasibility study's local working group. UHVNHA which has a large membership of organizations, local governments, and individuals from throughout the study area, was incorporated in August 2000. This organization is proposed to be the organizational entity to manage the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area. UHVNHA originated with the Tri-Corners History Council, which was formed in 1995 to help develop a sense of regional identity and coordinate local historical and cultural activities in northwestern Connecticut, southwestern Massachusetts, and the bordering area of New York (these communities are located within the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, which covers areas only within New York State).

One of the initial projects of the Tri-Corners History Council was to develop a tri-state Iron Heritage Trail, which has identified over 100 iron industry sites in the region and has published a trail map. This project was designated as an official project of the federal "Save America's







Beckley Furnace, East Canaan, CT

Treasures” program. A related project has been preservation of the Beckley Iron Furnace (1847), which is the State of Connecticut’s only “Industrial Monument.” The Tri-Corners History Council also has placed new historic markers in the area, created the “Ethan Allen Trail,” and published the book *Arsenal of the Revolution*.

In 1999, the council established the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area Assembly to pursue creation of Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area to interpret the full range of heritage themes in the region.

To obtain input for this Heritage Area Feasibility Study, UHVNHA helped facilitate the participation of state and local officials, historians, owners of historic sites, cultural organizations, regional planning commissions, chambers of commerce, local and regional environmental organizations, and other interested citizens. Many of the persons and organizations have become members of UHVNHA. The group organized many meetings and site visits and provided extensive published resources to the National Park

Service. UHVNHA co-sponsored with the National Park Service a public workshop on the region’s heritage themes that was held on November 17, 2001. The working group provided critical input on such key issues as geographic scope, interpretive themes, the roles of different ethnic groups in the region, and heritage preservation opportunities. UHVNHA also sponsored a History Fair with local historical organizations, focusing on the presence of Shays’ Rebellion in the area. It organized a commemoration in Great Barrington of the centennial of W.E.B. DuBois’s classic *The Souls of Black Folk* and a weekend of heritage walking tours for the fall of 2002. The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA), serving in a consultative role, gathered resource data and organized it into a Geographic Information System (GIS) database and base map, which is at the end of this report.

Representatives of the Mohican Nation, including members of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band in Wisconsin, attended the workshop and discussed the importance of including the story of the Mohicans in the proposed national heritage area.



**HISTORIC RESOURCES**

**UPPER HOUSATONIC VALLEY  
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA  
FEASIBILITY STUDY**

U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region - BOSO

# Upper Housatonic Valley

## National Heritage Area Description

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### Geographic Area

The Mohican family of the Algonkian Indians named the river “usi-a-di-en-uk.” According to popular interpretations, the word has been construed to mean “beyond the mountain place.” According to Mohican language scholar Lion Miles, the term is closer to meaning “place of stones,” basing his interpretation on the root word in “Housatonic” meaning “stone.”

The Housatonic River flows from three sources in western Massachusetts. The main stem of the Housatonic River is formed by the joining together of the East, West, and Southwest Branches of the Housatonic River in the vicinity of Pittsfield. The East Branch begins at Muddy Pond in Hinsdale and Washington and flows approximately 17 miles, dropping 480 feet before merging with the West Branch. Outflows from Pontoosuc Lake in Lanesboro and Onoto Lake in Pittsfield merge to form the West Branch, which drops 140 feet before joining the East Branch. The Southwest Branch originates at Richmond Pond in Richmond. The confluence of the three branches forms the headwaters of the Housatonic River main stem, which flows in a southerly direction 132 miles to its outfall in Long Island Sound at Milford Point in Connecticut. The main stem of the river has an overall drop of 959 feet.

The Housatonic River and its tributaries drain a watershed area of 1,948 square miles. The northern boundary of the watershed is Mount Greylock, the highest mountain in Massachusetts. From its headwaters flowing south toward Great Barrington, the valley is narrow and the river flows quickly and makes several swift drops in elevation. In this section there is a good deal of commercial and industrial development. Below Great Barrington, the valley flattens and broadens to a width of about 14 miles. This region is rich in farmland. Through this section the river flows more slowly, meandering through the valley to Falls Village, CT. The sense of being in a valley is strong. To the east, the Berkshire Plateau reaches 1,500 to 1,800 feet, and to the west the Taconic range reaches over 2,000 feet, with

Mount Everett, in southwestern Massachusetts, rising to 2,600 feet.

As the Housatonic River moves into Connecticut, the valley walls narrow dramatically, with mountains rising to almost 2,000 feet (Bradford Mountain is 1,912 feet high). The river flows through a much harder substrate consisting of limestone, quartz, and granite, and the river bottom becomes much rockier. There are still some areas of northwestern Connecticut where the land is fertile and agriculture is practiced. The valley creates a strong sense of enclosure.

The main communities of the upper Housatonic Valley watershed are situated in the valley astride the river and connected by U.S. Route 7, the major north-south corridor in western New England.

### Geology

It is believed that in its earliest manifestation, over 50 million years ago, the Housatonic River was a straight flowing river, originating above the Hudson Valley in New York State. The forces of erosion caused the Hudson River to eventually break through and capture the headwaters of the Housatonic, leaving the Housatonic with its source originating in Massachusetts.

The basin geology is complex, reflecting the results of hundreds of millions of years of natural processes. Most of the valley is underlain by metamorphic rock, mainly gneiss and schist, which was formed during the ancient collision of the North American continent with Europe and Africa some 300 to 400 million years ago. The intense pressure of the collision hardened the rock and caused it to fold and fault. These rocks form the steep mountains found in parts of the valley.

Some portions of the valley, notably north of Falls Village and south of Cornwall Bridge, CT, are underlain by marble. This area is known as the “Marble Valley.” During the Paleozoic era, seas covered a large portion of the valley, leaving sedimentary rock made up of carbonate mud, shells, and marine fossils, materials which later formed limestone. Metamorphism turned this

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*“There are places in this country that we look at every day, but we never really see. They are the landscapes of heritage: places that seem so natural that they often go unrecognized, misunderstood, unprotected and mismanaged.”*

Robert Melnick, Landscape Preservationist

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limestone to marble. Above the bedrock is found glacial drift, comprised of the sand, silt, and boulders. Melting glaciers spread the drift across the terrain as they receded over 18,000 years ago.

#### **Flora and Fauna**

The upper Housatonic River watershed boasts a diverse and abundant array of plant and wildlife species. The watershed provides habitat for supporting the survival of rare and endangered species, as described in the *Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' BioMap: Guiding Land Conservation for Biodiversity in Massachusetts* (2001). There are three ecosystems in the upper Housatonic Valley: Western New



Deer on the Housatonic

England Marble Valleys, which covers the largest part of the upper Housatonic Valley; Berkshire Taconic Landscape, at the southwest corner of Massachusetts and the northwest corner of Connecticut along the New York border; and Lower Berkshire Hills. The Western New England Marble Valleys are home to more rare plant species than any other eco-region in Massachusetts (116 rare plant and animal species). Among the most important critical habitats are the marble ridges and ledges, caves, calcareous wetlands, and lakes and ponds found in the central portion of the watershed. Since the soil and surface water is less acidic, these areas are rich in nutrients and are especially suited to agriculture. The Berkshire Taconic Landscape (48 rare plant and animal species) is home to black bear, mink, bobcat, fisher, and migratory songbirds. The Berkshire Taconic Landscape contains one of the largest, healthiest, and most diverse forest areas in southern New England. The Lower Berkshire Hills ecosystem has 29 rare plant and animal species in its forested towns situated at 1,000 to 1,700 feet.

Marble ridges and ledges, such as Bartholomew's Cobble in Ashley Falls, MA, the Great Falls area in Canaan, CT, and the Bull's Bridge area in Kent, CT, are home to many types of uncommon ferns. Caves, predominantly found in Salisbury are home to bats, invertebrates, and salamanders. The wetlands are considered some of the best global examples of calcareous or "sweet" water wetlands, according to The Nature Conservancy. The calcareous wetlands include Robbins Swamp in Canaan, CT, and Beeslick Pond and State Line Swamp in Salisbury, CT, which attract an abundance of insects and game and non-game bird species while supporting such diverse

plant species as the spreading globe flower and showy lady's slipper. Hard-water lakes and ponds, such as Twin Lakes in Salisbury and Mudge Pond in Sharon, CT, provide the ideal setting for many unique aquatic plants and algal and fish species.

Other habitats include floodplain forests, of which only remnants remain from Falls Village to Kent. High summits of windswept mountains dot the region. Sparsely vegetated with low-growing woody and herbaceous plants, lichens, and mosses, they support some species which are quite rare in southern New England. Black spruce bogs, such as Bingham Pond in Salisbury and Spectacle Pond in Kent, are poorly drained acidic wetlands with a luxuriant cover of mosses, black spruce, and larch. The bog areas are extremely fragile.

#### **River Uses**

The upper Housatonic River and its tributaries have played a prominent role in the growth and development of the valley land around them. The earliest settlers, the Indians, arrived in the area some 10,000 years ago. They settled along the river's banks, farmed the river's nutrient-rich floodplains, and fished the river. The Mohicans were the local tribe when the English arrived in the 1720s and 1730s. The English settlers made agriculture the major activity throughout the valley for much of the next century. It is still evident today in the wide, fertile floodplain of southwestern Massachusetts and northwestern Connecticut. During the 18th and 19th centuries, waterpower played an important role in the development of industry throughout the valley. Remnants of dams and mill races can still be seen. In the northwest hills of Connecticut, high-quality iron ore was abundant. The ore was smelted with limestone in blast furnaces, molded into finished iron utensils, tools, and armaments, and then cooled with river water. Many forests were cleared to make the charcoal used as fuel in the furnaces. The iron industry began in Salisbury in 1734, and more than 40 blast furnaces were in operation from Lanesboro, MA, to Kent, CT, during the 1800s. The last furnaces ceased operation in 1923.

The 1800s also witnessed extensive quarrying of marble and limestone in the "Marble Valley" of northwest Connecticut. Sheffield quarries pro-

vided marble for the Washington Monument, New York City Hall, and the Boston Custom House. The Pittsfield region was the first area in the nation to make paper for markets other than its own. By the end of the Civil War there were at least 28 paper mills in Berkshire County alone. By 1850, most towns had small factories along the upper Housatonic's banks, using the river as both a source of water for their manufacturing or milling processes and a dumping ground for their waste products. In 1930, W.E.B. DuBois, in a speech in Great Barrington, chastised towns for turning their backs on the Housatonic River: "They have used it as a sewer, a drain, a place for throwing their waste and their offal."

Industry polluted the river—iron, textiles, paper, and Pittsfield's General Electric plant. Discharges of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) from the General Electric plant have created major water quality problems. PCBs, which remain in the river's sediment, can persist for decades and are a cause for concern and continued remedial action. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments (1972) and the Clean Water Act (1977) established a system for controlling river pollutants by mandating removal of chemicals from wastewater discharges.

Since the earliest colonial times, the river and its tributaries have been used as a source of power. The earliest dams were built to operate gristmills and sawmills, and later to turn turbines. During the early 20th century, hydroelectric power dams were built in Great Barrington, Falls Village, and Kent. Hydroelectric power generation on the upper Housatonic continues to this day.

#### **River Protection and Management**

A 1979 U.S. Department of the Interior study found that the Housatonic River between the Massachusetts border and the Boardman Bridge in New Milford, CT, qualified for protection under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Despite the opportunity for federal designation, riverside communities in Connecticut opted for local protection and established the Housatonic River Commission. This commission, which has representatives from each participating town, has drafted a river management plan and has advised on projects related to the river's protection and development.



Because of residential, commercial, and industrial development, riverfront protection is even more critical to ensure the continued enjoyment of this beautiful river valley. In 1985, the upper Housatonic Valley gained permanent protection for 1,800 acres of river corridor land between Kent and Sharon through easements and acquisition by the National Park Service for the Appalachian Trail.

Today, both states, several towns, and river-oriented organizations, including the Housatonic Valley Association, Housatonic River Restoration, and Housatonic River Initiative, continue efforts to maintain the beauty and natural diversity of the river ecosystem. In 2002, the State of Connecticut officially designated the Housatonic Riverbelt Greenway. One project is assisting the development of local riverfront plans, knitting them together into a greenway of existing parks, open space parcels, and trails within the river corridor. Towns that have developed or are in the process of developing riverside greenways are: Hinsdale, Dalton, Pittsfield, Lee, and Great Barrington. The restoration of Great Barrington's Housatonic River Walk, for instance, has involved 1,500 volunteers. A significant portion of the Housatonic riverfront in Connecticut is owned by subsidiaries of Northeast Utilities. These undeveloped lands provide great environmental and recreational benefits. Local residents

are concerned that these areas remain under conservation as the electric utility industry goes through restructuring.

In recent years, the pollution of the Housatonic River by PCBs released by General Electric's Pittsfield plant has spurred further river planning, with approximately \$25 million being spent in remediation efforts. A 1999 consent decree provides for cleanup of the Housatonic River and associated areas, cleanup of the General Electric plant in Pittsfield, and compensation for natural resource damages. The main issues are the schedule and comprehensiveness of the cleanup. Housatonic River Restoration, Inc., a coalition of municipalities and river advocates in Massachusetts, developed "The Housatonic River Restoration Plan" (1999) to guide restoration activities. Such restoration projects could include improving water quality and physical access to the river, building trails and bikeways, and increasing appreciation for the Housatonic's historic role in development of the region. Cleanup advocates believe that improving the environmental quality of the Housatonic River will also have favorable economic consequences. They are following W.E.B. DuBois's admonition from 1930 that "for this valley the river must be the center. Certainly, it is the physical center; perhaps, in a sense, the spiritual center."

**The Housatonic River Walk in Great Barrington, MA, has reclaimed a littered, long neglected riverbank for public enjoyment. In 1930, W.E.B. DuBois chastised local towns for turning their backs on the Housatonic River: "They have used it as a sewer, a drain, a place for throwing their waste and offal."**





## **Recreation**

The Housatonic River has long provided bountiful recreational opportunities for hiking, camping, winter sports and water-based activities. The waters of the upper Housatonic River provide excellent whitewater canoeing and kayaking. Rattlesnake Rapids in Falls Village, the covered bridge at West Cornwall, and Bull's Bridge in Kent offer challenging whitewater runs. Flatwater canoeing is at its best in the gentler currents found in southern Massachusetts and Kent. Hikers may enjoy splendid views of the river from the Appalachian Trail, which parallels the river throughout the watershed. Fishing is a major activity along the entire length of the river and its tributaries. Trout, bass, and perch abound. There is a 9-mile "catch and release" trout management area between Sharon and Cornwall.

Current deliberations about re-licensing hydropower dams on the river could lead to different flow conditions, which could change recreational opportunities. Today the river is impounded behind dams, and the water is released to drive hydropower turbines during times of peak power demand. It is being proposed to allow water to run freely in the river. Allowing the river to run freely could constrain white-water boating, but could enhance fishing opportunities.

Skiing is another favorite recreational activity. Ski resorts include Mohawk Mountain, in Connecticut, and Butternut Basin, Bosquet, Catamount, Jiminy Peak, and Brodie Mountain, in Massachusetts. There are many trails available for cross-country skiing. Salisbury is noted for its regional ski jumping competitions.

### **Appalachian Trail in the Upper Housatonic Valley**

Most of the Appalachian Trail in Connecticut and Massachusetts lies within the upper Housatonic Valley. The Appalachian Trail runs along the river for 5 miles between Kent and Cornwall Bridge, the longest stretch of river walk between Georgia and Maine.

The National Park Service retains primary responsibility for acquisition, development, and administration of the Appalachian Trail in consultation with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, the Massachusetts

Department of Environmental Management, and other state and local agencies. The Appalachian Trail runs 45 miles in Connecticut and 83 miles in Massachusetts. Besides the actual trail itself, the NPS owns approximately 7,000 acres of Appalachian Trail corridor lands in Connecticut and protects hundreds of additional acres with conservation easements. In Massachusetts, the NPS protects slightly less than half of the trail's length, with nearly all the remaining mileage preserved by state parks. The NPS has delegated the Appalachian Trail Conference day-to-day management of the trail, which in turn delegates local trail maintenance responsibility to local chapters. The Appalachian Mountain Club and its local chapters also play a role in the trail's maintenance.

The Appalachian Trail is the only NPS unit in the upper Housatonic Valley, though the Appalachian Trail has no administrative presence in the region.

## **Regional Economic Profile**

The economy of the upper Housatonic Valley cannot be easily analyzed as a cohesive whole because the states of Massachusetts and Connecticut organize economic data in different formats. The region's economic data has to be presented on a state-by-state basis.

In recent years, the Massachusetts part of the upper Housatonic Valley around Pittsfield has suffered economic woes from deindustrialization, while the Connecticut portion, in Litchfield County, has maintained a relatively stable economy. According to the 2000 census, the upper Housatonic Valley communities in Berkshire County have a population of 90,210. Berkshire County lost 11.5% or 17,000 of its population since 1970, while the state of Massachusetts grew by 8.5%. The biggest population losses were in the Pittsfield Metropolitan Statistical Area. In contrast, the Great Barrington Labor Market Area population grew by 11.5% during this period. In fact, Great Barrington has emerged as the shopping, entertainment, and employment hub for towns in the southern Berkshires and northwestern Connecticut—this demonstrates how socioeconomic realities ignore state lines.

The number of workers in Berkshire County has decreased by 11.5% since 1983. Much of this loss has stemmed from cutbacks in the urban manu-

**LEGEND**

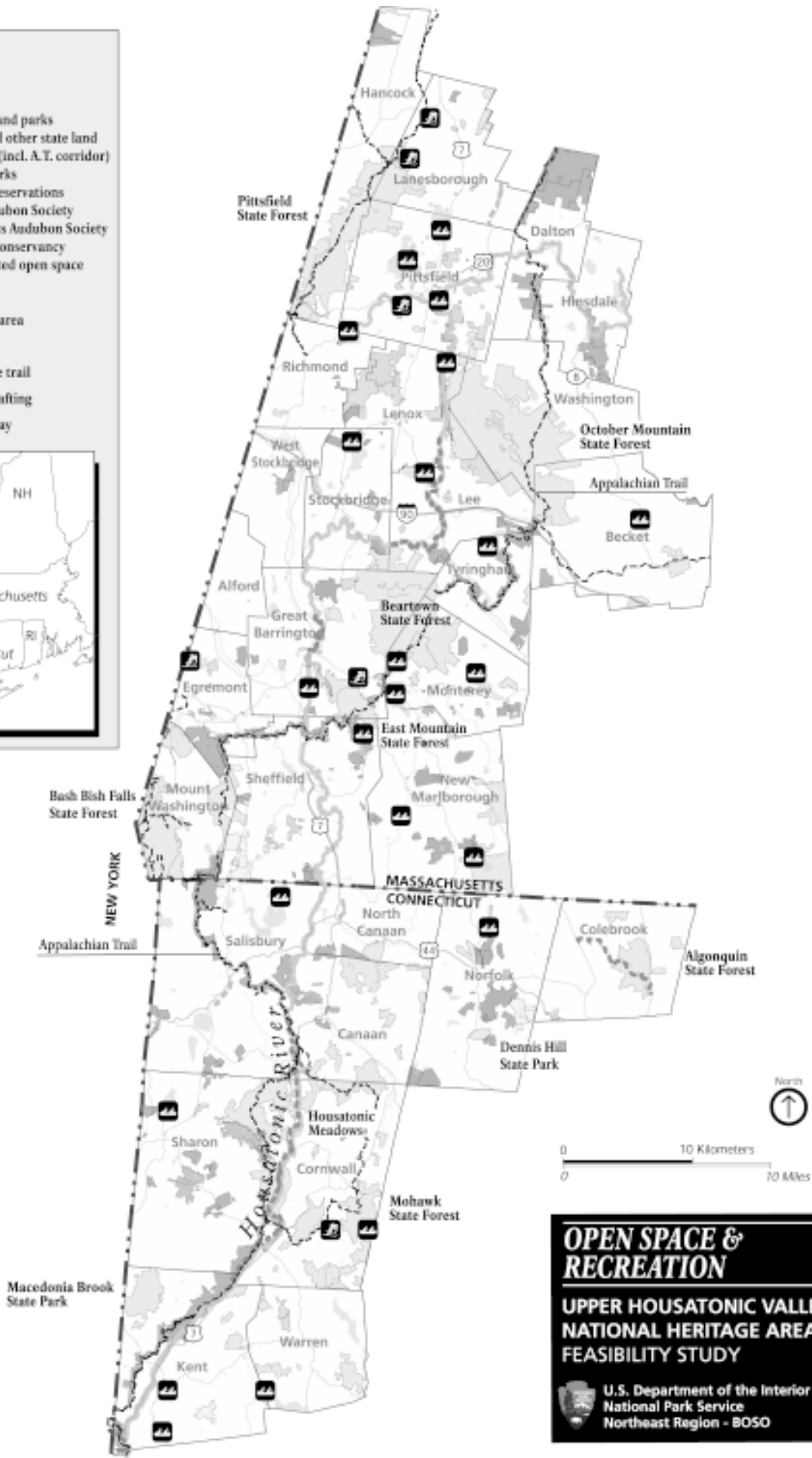
**Open Space**

- State forests and parks
- Preserves and other state land
- Federal land (incl. A.T. corridor)
- Municipal parks
- Trustees of Reservations
- National Audubon Society
- Massachusetts Audubon Society
- The Nature Conservancy
- Other protected open space

**Recreation**

- Downhill ski area
- Boat access
- Long distance trail
- Whitewater rafting
- Local greenway

**Regional Map**



**OPEN SPACE & RECREATION**

**UPPER HOUSATONIC VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA FEASIBILITY STUDY**

U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region - BOSO

facturing sector. Berkshire County's per capita income (1997) is \$27,200, which is \$4,039 less than the state average. Berkshire County ranks 10th out of 14 Massachusetts counties in per-capita income.

Pittsfield, as the upper Housatonic Valley's only city, its center for industry, and the Berkshire County seat, plays a pivotal role in the region's economy. Pittsfield has seen its industrial base erode since the downsizing of General Electric during the 1980s. The population of Pittsfield declined from 57,020 in 1970 to 45,793 in 2000, for a 20% decrease. Though thousands of jobs have been lost at the Pittsfield General Electric plant, there has been recent job growth in plastics and applied technology.

The city is pursuing strategies to making the transition to a more diversified economic base. Once demolition of superannuated General Electric industrial buildings is complete, Pittsfield will have a 52-acre site available for economic redevelopment. The Berkshire Council for Growth, a public-private partnership for promoting economic development in the Pittsfield area, is pursuing four goals: recruitment of skilled workers, job retention, expansion of existing businesses, and new business development. A part of this effort is Berkshire Connect, a suc-

cessful program to upgrade the region's telecommunications infrastructure and make it more attractive to technology-oriented businesses. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission expands upon these goals to emphasize promoting regional economic cooperation, creating a stronger regional image, and enhancing downtowns in the area.

According to the Berkshire Visitors Bureau, Berkshire County receives \$250 million in annual tourism expenditures, not including day-trippers and international visitors. There are approximately 3,370 employees in the tourism industry, which produces \$17 million directly in state and local hospitality taxes. Tourism accounts for 14% of Berkshire County jobs, with retail (which is related to tourism) having 13.6% of the jobs. In FY2000, Berkshire County municipalities collected \$4,425,000 in local lodging taxes, which ranks well behind Cape Cod and Greater Boston, but ahead of such counties as Plymouth, Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, Bristol, and Nantucket. The Berkshire Visitors Bureau estimates that the region attracts 2.5 million visitors annually. The 11 largest cultural venues attract 1.2 million visitors, with an annual economic impact of \$102 million. Tanglewood alone has an annual economic impact of \$60 million.



Canoe Excursion

In the Connecticut communities of the upper Housatonic Valley, the population is 18,582 (2000 U.S. Census), virtually flat since 1990. It has a work force of 12,000. Since this area is mainly rural and has little industry, the economy has been more stable. Important economic sectors in the area include private schools, self-employment, construction, government, and agriculture.

Tourism in northwestern Connecticut is a leading industry, even though there are no large-scale tourist attractions in the area. Tourism data is not broken out for the eight upper Housatonic Valley communities in Connecticut, so this study must rely upon data from the Litchfield Hills Visitors Bureau, which takes in 27 communities in Northwestern Connecticut. One may extrapolate the economic impact of tourism in the upper Housatonic by assuming it to be roughly one-quarter of the tourism impact for the entire Litchfield Hills. The Litchfield Hills district has a tourism industry of \$267 million (2000 data) with 5,221 jobs and \$32 million in state and local lodging taxes.

Local officials estimate that between one-third and one-half of visitors to the Upper Housatonic Valley come from the New York City area, making up the largest contingent of vacationers.

Greater Boston does not provide as many visitors, although it is located a little over two hours away and the Boston Symphony Orchestra makes its summer home at Tanglewood in Lenox. Visitors staying at lodgings made up 24% of visitors; campgrounds made up 14%; 46% stayed with friends and relatives; and 16% were day-trippers.

Surveys by the Litchfield Hills Visitors Bureau indicate that the main reasons tourists visit the region are culture/heritage, romance, and “to take a break.” A State of Connecticut-sponsored study (2000) confirmed these findings when it learned that Northeast urbanites particularly value the upper Housatonic Valley for getaway vacations and its natural, cultural, and recreational qualities. This study also found that tourism industry businesses in the upper Housatonic Valley want to develop more events to extend the tourism season beyond the May-October high season. Surveyed businesses desire improved signage and more cooperative advertising programs.

Besides the positive impact from increased tourism, the upper Housatonic Valley regards heritage area designation as making the area more desirable to live in. Improving the region’s image and quality of life can attract new businesses, entrepreneurs, and skilled workers.



Great Upper Housatonic Canoe Race



# Key Interpretive Themes Relating to the Nation's and the Region's History

The research and planning process for this study has developed four major themes which tell the story of the upper Housatonic Valley. These heritage themes reflect events and movements that have been important in American history. These themes were intensively discussed at the Upper Housatonic Valley Heritage Themes Workshop, held at the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge on November 17, 2001, and at board meetings of the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, Inc. A number of site visits and an extensive array of published materials also informed the development of these themes.

The heritage themes for the proposed Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area reflect a strong “sense of place.” Several works argue for the region’s independent spirit, including Chard Powers Smith’s *The Housatonic: Puritan River* (1946) and Richard D. Birdsall’s *Berkshire County: A Cultural History* (1959), which explained how the region’s relative remoteness led it to develop a unique cultural identity during the 18th and 19th centuries. The unifying element of three of the major heritage themes described below is the landscape. The iron industry located in the upper Housatonic Valley because of high-quality iron ore deposits. Both the iron and paper industries, as well as agriculture, consumed the trees and produced widespread deforestation. The same landscape maintained scenic rural qualities that attracted writers, artists, musicians, and vacationers, making it America’s leading cultural resort. In seeking to preserve and cultivate scenery that would appeal to visitors, citizens of the valley undertook extensive and influential conservation and beautification efforts. An extended essay “Exploration of Heritage Themes of the Upper Housatonic Valley” is provided as Appendix I.

## A. Cultural Resort

The upper Housatonic Valley is noted for a long-standing literary tradition, the work of prominent artists and architects, and world-class music, dance, and theater. The area’s natural beauty has long attracted artists and those interested in culture. Herman Melville wrote *Moby*

*Dick* while living in Pittsfield, and Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote *House of the Seven Gables* at Stockbridge. Other important authors who lived or vacationed and wrote in the region were Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, early American novelist Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Edith Wharton, James Thurber, and Georges Simenon. Prominent artists, whose work is exhibited at local museums, include sculptors Daniel Chester French, Henry Hudson Kitson, and Norman Rockwell. Alexander Calder, Jasper Johns, and illustrator Eric Sloane also worked in the area.

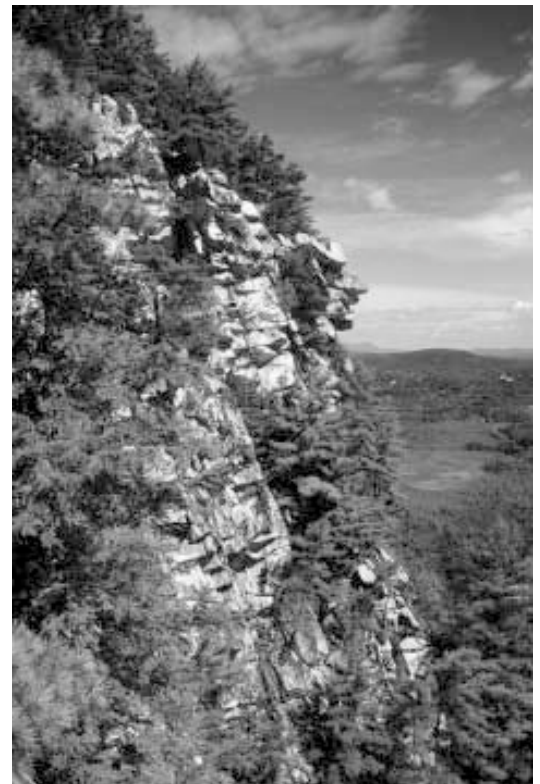
The upper Housatonic Valley also attracted the interest of the Hudson River School of artists, who were painting dramatic landscapes in the scenic valley just west of the upper Housatonic. Thomas Cole, Frederic Church, John Kensett, and Asher B. Durand each painted scenes of the upper Housatonic Valley between the 1830s and the Civil War. The painters and writers promoted

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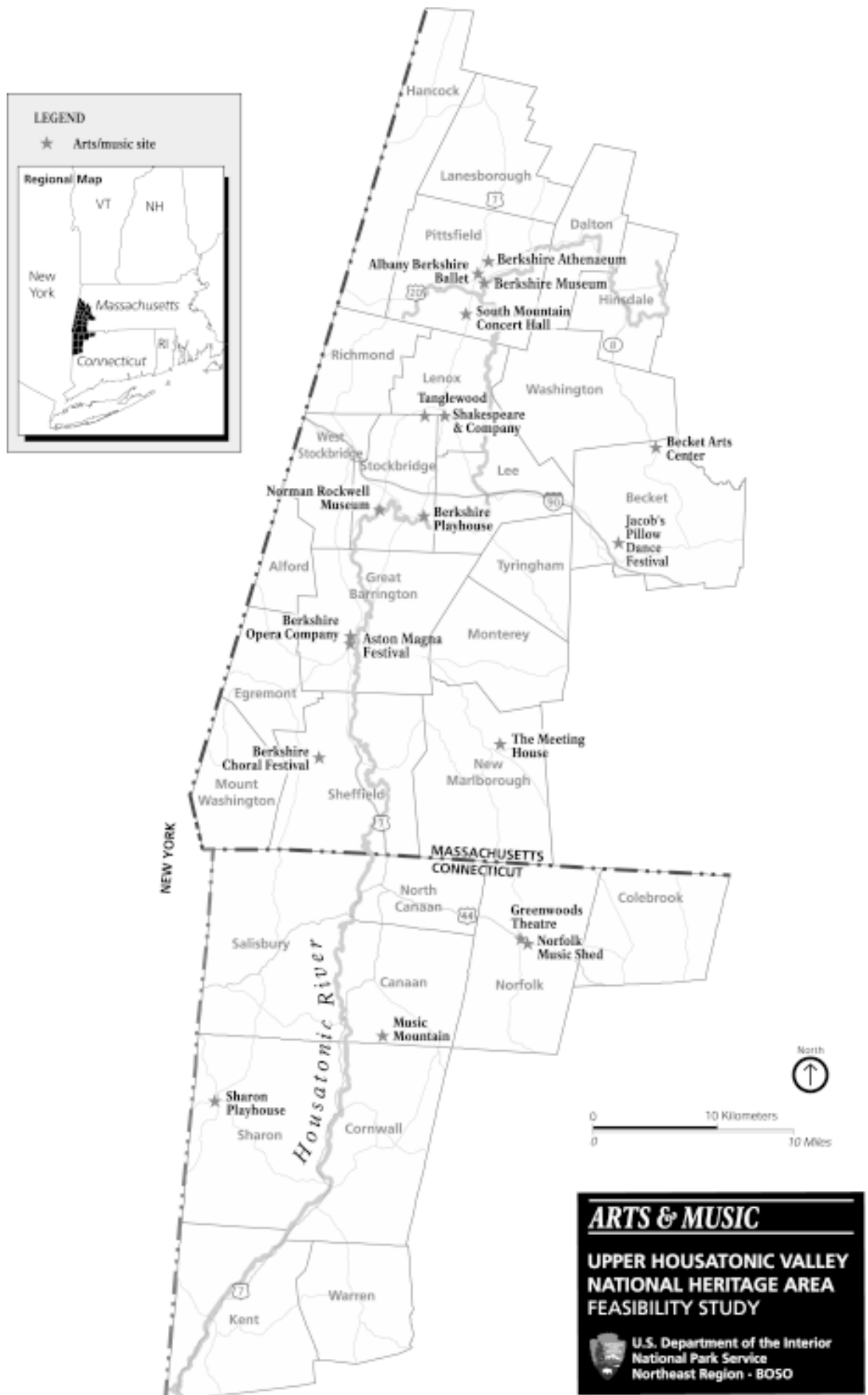
*“I thank you for your easy-flowing long letter (received yesterday) which flowed through me, and refreshed all my meadows, as the Housatonic—opposite me—does in reality.”*

Letter from Herman Melville to Nathaniel Hawthorne, July 22, 1851

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Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville met at a picnic on Monument Mountain in 1850. The mountain has been conserved by the Trustees of Reservations since 1899.



the region's reputation as a pastoral Arcadia where one could pursue a life of culture in harmony with nature (see the catalogue for the 1990 painting exhibit at the Berkshire Museum, Maureen Johnson Hickey and William T. Oedel, *A Return to Arcadia: Nineteenth Century Berkshire County Landscapes*). Many artists and craftspeople continue to work in the upper Housatonic Valley, as is evidenced by the multitude of galleries and studios.



Herman Melville wrote *Moby Dick* at this writing table at Arrowhead, Pittsfield, MA.

The pattern at many resorts has been for artists to discover and publicize the place, then wealthy vacationers and the middle-class. During the late 19th century, New York business magnates built over 75 lavish estates around Lenox and Stockbridge. Over time, the wealthy families became patrons of the arts, particularly in the field of music. Wealthy patrons, a growing audience of vacationers, and the region's beauty attracted many musicians and artists to the upper Housatonic Valley.

During the 20th century, the upper Housatonic Valley became the country's preeminent summer classical music resort, with the establishment of Tanglewood (summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra), Music Mountain, the Norfolk Music Festival, the South Mountain Concerts, the Aston Magna Festival, the Berkshire Choral Festival, and other venues. Composer Charles Ives celebrated "The Housatonic at Stockbridge" in his piece "Three Places in New England."

Theater has been represented by Shakespeare & Company, the Berkshire Theatre Festival, and Tri-Arts at the Sharon Playhouse. The Jacob's



Boston Symphony Orchestra music director Serge Koussevitzky established the BSO's summer home at Tanglewood in 1936. He is pictured with his protégé and Tanglewood favorite, Leonard Bernstein.

Pillow Dance Festival has been the foremost international summer dance festival in the country for many years. The upper Housatonic Valley draws leading performers from New York and Boston. Berkshire County promotes itself as "America's Premier Cultural Resort." Although there are many summer cultural festivals and artist colonies across the United States, none has the reputation or concentration of cultural venues of the upper Housatonic Valley.

## B. Shaping a Scenic Landscape

The upper Housatonic Valley is noted for its scenic landscape. Its development as a rural resort relied on both outstanding natural qualities and cultural values that influenced appreciation and preservation of the scenery.

During the 18th century, English settlers treated the landscape in a utilitarian manner. The English introduced a land use ethic that partitioned land for individual ownership and was more exploitive of natural resources than the Indians were, according to William Cronon's *Changes in the Land*. By the early 1800s, much of the area, including many hilltops, had been cleared for farming. The iron industry required extensive tree-cutting to make charcoal to fuel the iron furnaces. After the Civil War, when the paper-making industry started to use wood pulp as a raw material, that industry put further pressure on wood resources. In 1850, 75 percent of the region was deforested, while today 75 percent of the land is covered with trees.

Even though much of the region's forest was cleared, artists and vacationers were starting to prize the upper Housatonic Valley for its scenic qualities. The rural landscape was an antidote to the urban hurly-burly of New York and Boston. After the Civil War, the newly rich built ostentatious summer estates, particularly in Lenox and Stockbridge, which imposed a formally planned aesthetic upon the landscape. Noted architects designed these "cottages" in various historic revival styles. They included Stanford White (Naumkeag, Stockbridge Casino), Richard Upjohn (Highwood), Guy Lowell (Spring Lawn), Carrere and Hastings (Bellevue, Brookside), and Peabody and Stearns (Elm Court Wheatleigh). Alfredo S.G. Taylor designed several notable vacation estates in Norfolk, CT, around the turn of



the twentieth century. Frederick Law Olmsted's firm designed the grounds of several estates to create dramatic vistas of the surrounding hills and valleys. Landscape architect Fletcher Steele's "Blue Stairs" (1926) at Naumkeag was one of America's first modernistic landscape designs.

Despite the lavish manicured estates, the rustic landscape of the upper Housatonic Valley forms the essence of the area's image. In order to preserve and enjoy the region's landscape, wealthy residents established extensive nature preserves on large tracts of land they had purchased. Land was cheap because farmers had abandoned farmsteads that were no longer competitive with Midwestern farms. Large deforested patches had lost their economic value. Stockbridge's David Dudley Field, Jr., during the 1870s, built carriage drives on Monument Mountain that encouraged the general public to enjoy mountain scenery. Secretary of the Navy William Whitney created an enormous game preserve in Lee, Lenox, and Washington, with a landscape plan by Olmsted's firm.

By the early 20th century, when the income tax and a changing economy forced wealthy families to give up their estates, several of these areas became state parks and forests. The conservation movement was underway, and state governments were starting to restore extensive

natural landscapes, including October Mountain State Forest (Whitney's game preserve) and Beartown State Forest (once part of the estate of engineer Fredrick Pearson). Connecticut state parks that have similar histories include Dennis Hill (belonging to New York surgeon Dr. Frederick S. Dennis), Kent Falls, Macedonia Brook, Mohawk Mountain, and Campbell Falls (contributed by the White Memorial Foundation). State parks and private conservation easements protected Mount Riga, which had once been home to the iron industry. Yale professor Robert Gordon has told much of this story in *A Landscape Transformed: The Ironmaking District of Salisbury, Connecticut*. The environmental movement of the last 30 years has strengthened the interest in conservation and spurred scores of creative conservation projects across the upper Housatonic Valley watershed. Environmentalism has also reinforced the region's efforts at scenic beautification.

Stockbridge originated the movement for community beautification when it established the nation's first village improvement society, the Laurel Hill Association, in 1853. The village improvement movement, which eventually spread across the country, sought to beautify village landscapes through plantings and other public amenities. Stockbridge became an icon of the American small town when Norman Rockwell moved there in the 1950s and used it as the sub-



Stockbridge, MA, established the first Village Improvement Society, the Laurel Hill Association, in 1853. The trees planted on Main Street were a result of the Association's efforts. Note the Red Lion Inn on the left in this 1897 scene.

ject of many of his best-known works. The Norman Rockwell Museum, in Stockbridge, promotes popular perceptions of the area as a true slice of Americana.

The Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway (U.S. Route 20), which runs through Lee and Becket, became the country's first modern mountain crossing for automobiles, when it was paved in 1910 and dubbed the Jacob's Ladder Trail. The Jacob's Ladder Trail was the idea of wealthy Lenox summer resident Cortland Field Bishop, of The Winter Palace, who wanted to make the 1,775-foot summit passable for motorists.

The Appalachian Trail, which stretches the length of the upper Housatonic Valley in Connecticut and Massachusetts, was laid out between 1928 and 1935. The Appalachian Trail is the country's foremost regional hiking trail and the model for the National Scenic Trail system. Efforts to clean up the Housatonic River and make its banks available for public enjoyment, dating to the 1940s, rank among the oldest river protection initiatives in the country. These efforts have combined to make the upper Housatonic Valley one of the best-conserved and

most beautiful regions in the East, solidifying its position as a premier resort area.

### C. Cradle of Industry

Two of America's earliest industries had a conspicuous presence in the upper Housatonic Valley. The iron industry began to develop in the Salisbury District (northwestern Connecticut, southwestern Massachusetts, and a bit of bordering New York) in the 1730s, drawn by the presence of high-grade iron ore. Forges and furnaces manufactured cannons and supplies for the Continental Army during the American Revolution, making the upper Housatonic important to the independence effort.

Eighteenth-century British mercantile laws constrained ironmaking in America (trying to force Americans to send raw pig iron to England to be manufactured into finished products and then sold back to the colonists), so the iron industry of the upper Housatonic Valley may have supported political independence in order to obtain economic independence. The connection between mercantile constraints on the iron industry and revolutionary politics deserves further research as an element of the proposed heritage area.

**Right:** The iron industry in the Upper Housatonic Valley lasted from 1735 until 1923. One of the major mines was located at Lakeville, CT, seen in 1900.



**Above:** All that is left today of iron manufacturies, are the stone furnaces themselves. The wooden buildings around the furnaces, such as Richmond, MA, Furnace (1890), were demolished.



The region's iron industry manufactured all sorts of armaments, train wheels, and tools during the 19th century. The construction of the Housatonic Railroad in the 1840s facilitated industrial development in the upper Housatonic Valley. After the Civil War, the region's industry became less competitive. The last iron furnace closed in 1923.

Papermaking began in 1801 with the founding of Crane & Company in Dalton. Crane & Company still manufactures paper used for U.S. currency. By the 1840s, the southern Berkshires was the center of the country's paper industry. Although America's first wood pulp paper operations started in Curtisville and Lee, the region has been best known as the home of fine stationery paper. Dard Hunter's artisanal papermaking enterprise at Lime Rock in the late 1920s and 1930s helped inspire the rebirth of the craft of making paper by hand in this country.

William Stanley demonstrated the first successful alternating current (AC) transformer, which facilitated long-distance electrical transmission, in Great Barrington in 1886. Four years later he opened a factory in Pittsfield that became a major manufacturer of electrical generation equipment. In 1894, Stanley demonstrated the first long-distance (over seven-and-a-half miles) transmission of alternating current in Great Barrington. General Electric bought out Stanley's firm in 1907. During World War II, the plant employed as many as 14,000. GE's Pittsfield plant remained a major electrical equipment producer until deindustrialization commenced in recent years. The Pittsfield GE plant was also the site of important innovations in plastics, particularly the development of Lexan, a virtually unbreakable plastic resin used in automobiles, airplanes, and construction materials.

Prior to establishment of Stanley's factory, the leading Pittsfield industry was the manufacturing of woolen textiles, with mills dating back to the early 19th century. An early Pittsfield innovation was a woolen carding machine.

#### **D. The Revolutionary War Era and the Development of Democracy**

The upper Housatonic Valley was the site of several important events at the time of the American Revolution and the founding of the Republic. The Sheffield Declaration, an early petition of

grievances against British rule, was drafted at Colonel John Ashley's House (a museum maintained by the Trustees of Reservations) in 1773. An early act of resistance against British rule occurred in 1774, when an armed mob of farmers closed the court at Great Barrington. Militias from Ethan Allen's original home in northwestern Connecticut joined the "Green Mountain Boys" in their capture of Fort Ticonderoga during the American Revolution in 1775. General Henry Knox hauled the captured British cannon from Ticonderoga across the Berkshire Hills (along modern-day Massachusetts State Route 23 or the Knox Trail) to Boston, where they were used to drive out the redcoats in 1776. The Salisbury iron industry provided 75 percent of the cannons and other armaments to the Continental Army, as has been described in Edward Fales, Jr.'s book *Arsenal of the Revolution* (1976). Also supplying Continental troops during the Revolution was a large leather goods commissary operating in Richmond.

After the Revolution, a deep economic depression and extensive mortgage foreclosures spawned Shays' Rebellion in western Massachusetts. There were battles and other incidents at Sheffield and Stockbridge. Shays' Rebellion was the most important of the backcountry upheavals that swept the country during the early years of the nation. The rebellion in western Massachusetts persuaded many Americans of the need to adopt a stronger federal government and the U.S. Constitution. Edward Bellamy, who later wrote the utopian novel *Looking Backward*, wrote the novel *The Duke of Stockbridge* (1879) about Shays' Rebellion. It was serialized in *The Berkshire Courier*. The book depicts the differences in social classes that were central to the uprising, even to the point of presenting the rustic dialect of the rebels as almost a separate language.

When the Massachusetts State Constitution (1780), which was the world's first written constitution and a model for the U.S. Constitution, asserted that all men are created "free and equal," Sheffield black slave Elizabeth Freeman ("Mumbet") brought a legal claim to obtain her freedom from her master Colonel John Ashley. The courts granted her freedom. This led to Massachusetts being the first state to abolish slavery, in 1783.

Famed civil rights leader W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963) was born and raised in Great Barrington, MA. He called the Housatonic the "golden river."



Other slaves who obtained their freedom at this time were African-American soldiers who fought in the Continental Army. A number of them lived in upper Housatonic Valley towns, including a maternal ancestor of pioneer civil rights leader W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963), who was born and raised in Great Barrington. Unfortunately, no buildings where DuBois lived survive. DuBois wrote *The Souls of Black Folk* and helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

#### E. Additional Heritage Themes

The upper Housatonic Valley has other heritage themes that are important to its regional development. At the time of European colonization, the Mohicans were sparsely settled in the upper Housatonic (the Mohicans inhabited the upper Hudson and upper Housatonic Valleys). The meeting of the Indian and English cultures and subsequent Mohican migration to the Midwest reflected aspects of the frontier experience that played out across the country. There is a current resurgence of interest in Mohican culture and the Stockbridge-Munsee Band reconnecting with its original community.

Western Massachusetts and upper New York State were hospitable to the Shakers, who were one of 19th-century America's best-known communitarian sects. The Hancock Shaker Village is one of the country's foremost interpretive sites of Shaker culture. There was another Shaker settlement in Tyringham.

#### Relation to the National Park Service

##### Thematic Framework

The four primary heritage themes of the upper Housatonic Valley fit with the revised "Thematic Framework" (<http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/thematic.html>) that the National Park Service adopted in 1994 for interpreting the role of historic sites in American history. The National Park Service has identified eight major historic themes that cover the full span of our nation's history. Of these, the upper Housatonic Valley's heritage resources fit mainly into the following NPS categories:

- 1) Expressing Cultural Values  
(Cultural Resort)
- 2) Transforming the Environment  
(Shaping a Scenic Landscape)
- 3) Developing the American Economy  
(Cradle of Industry)
- 4) Shaping the Political Landscape; Creating Social Institutions and Movements  
(Revolutionary War Era and Development of Democracy).

The stories of the Mohicans and the Shakers would fit under the NPS thematic categories of (1) Peopling Places and (2) Creating Social Institutions and Movements.

As regards suitability for designation, the upper Housatonic Valley interprets a range of themes that are not interpreted by other national heritage areas.



*View of Great Barrington, 1849, painting by Henry Antonio Wenzler*



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*“We mean to work... till Art combined with Nature shall have rendered our town the most beautiful and attractive spot in our ancient commonwealth.”*

Mary Hopkins Goodrich, on founding the Laurel Hill Society in Stockbridge, 1853

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Sculptor Henry Hudson Kitson used Santarella, in Tyringham, MA, as his studio in the 1930s & 40s. The wooden shingle roof is designed to resemble a thatched cottage.

# Evaluation of the Proposed Heritage Area According to Federal Criteria

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When new National Park Service units are being considered for designation by Congress, the NPS examines their significance, suitability, and feasibility. In the case of this study, the federal Upper Housatonic National Heritage Area Study Act of 2000 stipulates eight criteria for analyzing, documenting, and determining the upper Housatonic Valley's significance, suitability, and feasibility to become a national heritage area.

The significance analysis examines the proposed heritage area in light of the National Park Service definition of a national heritage area, which "is a place designated by Congress where natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These patterns make National Heritage Areas representative of the national experience through the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved in them. Continued use of National Heritage Areas by people whose traditions helped to shape the landscapes enhances their significance."

The suitability analysis considers whether a specific type of resource is already adequately represented in the national park system. For heritage areas, suitability analysis analyzes the type, quality, and quantity of resources within the study area.

The question of feasibility is pertinent to establishment of a national heritage Area. Feasibility analysis considers the size and configuration of the proposed area, the participation of local heritage, cultural, and environmental groups, organizational requirements, project costs, and local support for the federal designation.

The analysis of the following eight criteria stipulated in the Upper Housatonic National Heritage Area Study Act of 2000 provides the material for evaluating whether the proposed Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area is suitable and feasible for federal designation:

**1. Has an assemblage of natural, historic, and cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use, and are best managed through partnerships among public and private entities and by combining diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities.**

The upper Housatonic Valley is noted for the natural beauty of its river valley and hills. It had an American Indian presence until the Stockbridge-Munsee community of Mohicans left the Berkshires for New York State in 1783. The upper Housatonic Valley was considered a wilderness situated between the Connecticut and Hudson Valleys for decades after the first European settlement. There is evidence of Dutch settlers moving in from the Hudson as early as the 1690s. English settlers from Massachusetts and Connecticut started establishing communities in the area in the 1720s. The region participated in the nation-making events of the American Revolution and Shays' Rebellion. Its iron and papermaking industries played an early role in the Industrial Revolution.

The beautiful scenery and distinctive local culture have attracted many visitors. First came writers like Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. Then came wealthy industrialists like George Westinghouse, Andrew Carnegie, the Vanderbilts, and the Whitneys. They built opulent "cottages" with as many 100 rooms. Today, many of those mansions have become museums and resorts for middle-class vacationers. Some of the wealthy summer residents created large estates that became conserved open space and state parks in the 20th century. This environmental conservation has ensured that the region's scenic beauty can be enjoyed by all. The early vacationers also established such cultural shrines as Tanglewood, Music Mountain, the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, the South Mountain Concerts, and the

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*"I was born by a golden  
river and in the shadow  
of two great hills."*

W.E.B. DuBois, *Darkwater*

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Scene on the Housatonic River, 1880, by Arthur Parton

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. Today the Berkshire Visitors Bureau touts its region as "America's Premier Cultural Resort."

The upper Housatonic Valley has 24 historical and cultural museums, with 16 in Massachusetts and 8 in Connecticut. There are several existing heritage trails that indicate the historic significance of the upper Housatonic Valley and the potential for further heritage trail development: the Tri-Corners Ethan Allen Trail—historic sites connected with Ethan Allen and the establishment of the region's iron industry; Connecticut's Northwest Corner Iron Industry Heritage Trail; the Herman Melville Trail—focusing on his Pittsfield home, Arrowhead (National Historic Landmark), where he wrote *Moby Dick*.

Other national historic landmarks in the study area are in Massachusetts. They include: The Mount, Lenox, the summer home of novelist Edith Wharton whose novels *Ethan Frome* and *Summer* were set in the Berkshires; Mission House, Stockbridge, a 1739 mission to convert local Indians to Christianity; Crane and Company Old Stone Mill, Dalton, the papermaking museum at the oldest active paper company in the country and manufacturer of the paper for U.S. currency; the site of W.E.B. DuBois's boyhood home in Great Barrington.

The upper Housatonic Valley study area has a dense concentration of significant 18th- and 19th-century architecture. The Connecticut section has 50 sites and 9 historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places, and the Massachusetts section has over 70 sites and 9



historic districts on the National Register of Historic Places. (See Appendix II for a full list of National Register sites.) Almost every town has a traditional town center with a white clapboard meetinghouse, town hall, library, green, and historic commercial and residential structures. Even a city like Pittsfield has a traditional New England-style center at Park Square. Pittsfield boasts Wahconah Park, a baseball park opened in 1919 which has hosted minor league baseball virtually continuously to the present-day Berkshire Black Bears, of the Northern League.

One of the major concerns of residents and vacationers alike is that the upper Housatonic Valley can maintain its traditional small-town character in the face of creeping commercial and residential sprawl. Since the area's population has not grown in recent years, the area has been more successful than other places in controlling growth.

Local libraries have extensive resources on local history. The Berkshire Athenaeum, in Pittsfield, has special resource rooms for Herman Melville and local authors. The ample presence of material culture is also demonstrated by the dense concentration of antique shops in the region, particularly along U.S. Route 7 in Sheffield.

Most of the Appalachian Trail in Connecticut and Massachusetts lies within the upper Housatonic Valley. The Appalachian Trail is an outstanding natural and recreational resource that follows the course of the upper Housatonic watershed. The National Park Service owns approximately 7,000 acres of Appalachian Trail Corridor lands in Connecticut and protects hundreds of additional acres with conservation easements. In Massachusetts, the NPS protects land abutting slightly less than half the trail's 83 miles, with nearly all the remaining mileage preserved by the Commonwealth. Members of the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, Inc. have identified "ghost town" locations near the Appalachian Trail, at Bull's Bridge, Falls Village, Mount Riga, and other sites, that could be turned into an intriguing "ghost town" trail.

The upper Housatonic Valley is distinguished by several national natural landmarks, including Bartholomew's Cobble, Sheffield, MA, the greatest natural concentration of ferns in the United States; Beckley Bog, Norfolk, CT, the most

southerly sphagnum-heath-black spruce bog in New England; Bingham Pond Bog, Salisbury, CT, an extremely rare, undisturbed cold Northern spruce bog; and Cathedral Pines, Cornwall, CT, the largest stand of old-growth white pine and hemlock forest in New England.

Surprisingly, the upper Housatonic Valley has a number of large elm trees that have survived Dutch elm disease. The Majestic Elm Trail has over 50 major elm trees between Sharon, CT, and Dalton, MA. The presence of the magnificent shade trees has inspired an organization, Elm Watch, of Great Barrington, MA, to protect remaining elms and promote planting of disease-resistant elm specimens.

The natural environment of the upper Housatonic Valley is well preserved by many conservation areas managed by the states of Connecticut and Massachusetts and various land trusts and nonprofit organizations. Tens of thousands of acres are under conservation.

Connecticut has several state parks and forests in the region, including Housatonic Meadows, Kent Falls, Macedonia Brook, Campbell Falls, Dennis Hill, Haystack Mountain, Lake Waramaug, Algonquin, and Mohawk. The Massachusetts state parks and forests include Bash Bish Falls, Beartown, Jug End, Mount Everett, Mount Washington, Pittsfield, Wahconah Falls, and October Mountain. Several of these state parks and forests have significant resources built by the federal Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s, which have been inventoried by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management.

There are Massachusetts Audubon Wildlife Sanctuaries in Pittsfield (Canoe Meadows, which is on property once owned by writer Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.) and Lenox (Pleasant Valley). The National Audubon Society has two nature sanctuaries in Sharon, CT. The Trustees of Reservations, of Massachusetts, manages six nature conservation areas, including Monument Mountain, Tyringham Cobble, and Bartholomew's Cobble. The Nature Conservancy has extensive holdings in the southwest corner of Massachusetts and the northwest corner of Connecticut, which it calls the Berkshire Taconic Landscape and considers one of the "Last Great Places." Its holdings include Mount Plantain Preserve, Tatkon Preserve, and the



In 1734, Reverend John Sergeant established a mission to Christianize the Indians in Stockbridge, MA. The Mission House is a museum today.



Roger and Virginia Drury Preserve. The Berkshire Taconic Landscape is renowned for its very old second- growth forests and remnants of stands between 300 and 500 years of age.

The high quality of the upper Housatonic Valley's natural and built landscapes, however, cannot be taken for granted. Local citizens express a desire to ensure that new development complements the existing environment. A national heritage area designation could support future historic and environmental preservation efforts.

## **2. Reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folklife that are a valuable part of the national story.**

The upper Housatonic Valley is a distinctive region of New England located at the western edge of Massachusetts and Connecticut. Because of its physical remoteness from Boston and Hartford, beyond a 30-mile-wide range of high hills, it was settled by European colonists a few decades after the coast and the Connecticut and Hudson River Valleys. There was a Christian Indian mission town in Stockbridge between 1734 and 1783, when the Stockbridge Community moved to New York State. According to archaeologist Timothy Binzen, of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 218 Indian archaeological sites have been identified in 33 communities in the upper Housatonic Valley. The settlements were in the valley lowland. Binzen points out that ar-

chaeologists have never systematically surveyed these Indian sites. They were discovered haphazardly, and many sites may have been destroyed by modern development. There is an extensive amount of interest in researching and interpreting the story of the Mohican Indians in this area led by the Native American Institute at Columbia-Greene Community College, in nearby Hudson, New York.

The region's remoteness led its residents to think of themselves as living in a place apart. Shays' Rebellion, the post-American Revolution agrarian revolt of 1787 that influenced the U.S. Constitution, was based in part on the antipathy between western Massachusetts farmers and Boston's moneyed interests. The area's remote situation attracted the Shakers to establish settlements in the rural communities of Hancock and Tyringham. The Hancock Shaker Village demonstrates Shaker crafts and serves food based on Shaker recipes.

Chard Powers Smith's *The Housatonic: Puritan River* (1946) argued that the two-state region developed a particular culture and landscape. Richard D. Birdsall's book *Berkshire County: A Cultural History* (1959) explained how the Berkshire County (Massachusetts) portion of the upper Housatonic Valley developed a unique identity during the 18th and early 19th centuries based upon rural religious conserva-

The Shakers had a settlement in Hancock, MA, between 1783 and 1960. This Round Stone Barn promoted efficient dairying.



tism and populist politics. Other works describing the special regional characteristics of the upper Housatonic Valley include the Works Progress Administration's (WPA) guide *The Berkshire Hills* (1939), Roderick Peattie's *The Berkshire: The Purple Hills* (1948), and the WPA guide *Connecticut: A Guide to Its Roads, Lore, and People* (1939).

The upper Housatonic Valley also had influences from bordering New York State. Great Barrington native W.E.B. DuBois commented in his *Autobiography*: "Physically and socially our community belonged to the Dutch valley of the Hudson rather than to Puritan New England." The north-south orientation of the Housatonic Valley channeled traffic to New York City. The Berkshire papermaking industry, which started in 1801, relied upon New York City for its raw materials—rags—and its final customers. The construction of the Housatonic Railroad, which connected Pittsfield with Bridgeport and New York City during the 1840s, linked the upper Housatonic Valley more closely with New York. During the late 19th and 20th centuries, New York intellectuals, tycoons, and the middle class made the region a popular cultural resort.

Because of its relatively rural character, the upper Housatonic Valley has been able to maintain its distinct identity. The lack of a major north-south superhighway has minimized urbanization

and the metropolitan sprawl of New York. The comparatively low level of development pressure has helped communities retain the historic qualities of their buildings and landscapes.

The cultural life of the region has produced a tradition that has attracted writers, artists, musicians, and actors decade after decade. The writings of Catharine Maria Sedgwick, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edward Bellamy, and Edith Wharton created a tradition of regional literature anthologized in *The Berkshire Reader: Writings from New England's Secluded Paradise* (editor Richard Nunley). Shakespeare & Company mount well-regarded productions of the "Bard of Avon" and stages works based on the lives and writings of Berkshire-related authors, including dramatic adaptations of Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome* and *Summer*. Shakespeare & Company is planning the world's first historically accurate reconstruction of the Rose Playhouse (1587) for its grounds. Summer musical performances have become important regional traditions. A pre-concert picnic on the lawn at Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, is considered one of the region's essential summer rituals. Folksinger Arlo Guthrie celebrated Late Sixties Stockbridge in his famous album "Alice's Restaurant." He continues to hold summer folk concerts at the Guthrie Center, in a deconsecrated Episcopal church in Great Barrington.



Bellefontaine was built as a “cottage” in 1897, copying the Petit Trianon at Versailles. Today it is Canyon Ranch health resort in Lenox, MA.

The connection of the area to 19th-century wealthy vacationers continues. Not only are many of the elaborate “cottages” celebrated and reused, the nickname of the Lenox High School athletic teams is the “Millionaires.” In recent years, Lenox has revived the “Tub Parade,” a late 19th-century tradition of wealthy people closing the autumn resort season with a parade of flower-bedecked carriages called “tubs.” Members of the Colonial Carriage Driving Society drive restored antique carriages.

### **3. Provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, historic, cultural, and/or scenic features.**

One of the primary benefits of a heritage area designation would be strengthening a sense of regional identity, which, in turn, highlights the important historic stories and resources of the area. This creates support for preservation and better coordination between communities and institutions so that they are more effective and less isolated.

The upper Housatonic Valley has done an excellent job of conserving the natural environment with state, local, and private nonprofit preserves. The evidence is abundant in the region’s scenic landscape. Nevertheless, development pressures create new conservation needs, especially open space protection. Cleaning up the Housatonic River is a costly, long-term challenge.

The historic and cultural heritage of the upper Housatonic Valley has potential for further preservation and creative interpretation. Yale University historian Robert Gordon, in his book *Industrial Heritage in Northwest Connecticut*, stated the difficulty of visualizing the true appearance of the region’s iron industry. The remnants of 6 of 44 furnaces still exist; 4 either have been restored or are in the restoration process. The associated industrial buildings that originally surrounded the furnaces are no longer standing. The State of Connecticut has made a commitment to restore the old office building at the Beckley Furnace as an information center for the Iron Heritage Trail. Several other furnace restoration and archaeological investigations connected to the iron industry are also underway. The preservation efforts connected with the heritage area effort could help improve public appreciation of the industrial sites and the de-

pendence on fuel, mineral, and energy resources. This project also could spur the excavation of the Colebrook Forge, which was used during the American Revolution.

A prime opportunity for increased historic preservation and interpretation is at the industrial structures in Pittsfield. For most of the 20th century, General Electric had a major presence in Pittsfield, manufacturing electrical transformers and plastics. Most of those operations have been closed in recent years, and the city’s economy has suffered commensurately. Industrial buildings and artifacts are an untapped resource for community and economic development. At this point, little historical research has been done on Pittsfield’s industrial sector, including the textile mills that flourished between early 19th century and World War II. Such research could provide the foundation for the heritage area to make important contributions to Pittsfield’s preservation.

Susan Easley, Executive Director of the Berkshire Historical Society at Arrowhead, has reported that the historical society has a large collection of artifacts that it cannot exhibit for lack of adequate display space. The historical society is seeking to build new exhibit space at Arrowhead or acquire space elsewhere in the county. The heritage area designation could help promote an interest in regional history and develop venues, including joint facilities, for exhibiting valuable historic artifacts.

Recognizing that local history has probably not received the interpretation that it warrants, the Berkshire Historical Society is seeking to undertake a review of local history interpretation at historical museums and societies across the county. This project could help identify projects to be undertaken under the heritage area program. Much of the tourism emphasis in the region is on the performing arts, with historical landmarks and themes receiving less attention. The heritage area designation could change this, helping to promote increased historic preservation and interpretation, enhancing regional pride, and developing a more varied array of tourism opportunities.

There are many historic preservation projects underway in the upper Housatonic Valley that could benefit from the publicity and heightened



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*"The foliage having its autumn hues, Monument Mountain looks like a headless sphinx, wrapt in a rich Persian shawl."*

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Journal*, 1850

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community support generated by heritage area status. These projects include the rehabilitation of the Colonial Theater in Pittsfield and commemoration of the site of country's first wood pulp grinder mill in Curtisville. Ventfort Hall, a decaying Lenox mansion owned by Sarah Morgan, J.P. Morgan's sister, is being restored as the Museum of the Gilded Age. In the late 1990s, Ventfort Hall was saved from demolition, used for a setting in the film *The Cider House Rules*, and is an intriguing preservation work in progress. The site of W.E.B. DuBois's boyhood home in Great Barrington, a national historic landmark, has only a marker. The site's owner, the University of Massachusetts, and historic groups in Greater Barrington are undertaking a project that would more effectively interpret the life and work of DuBois. The extensive historic preservation and arts activities in the area has attracted a local community of fine artisans in such areas as woodworking, bricklaying, plastering, and landscape gardening.

The Falls Village-Canaan Historical Society is restoring the Falls Village Depot. The Berkshire Scenic Railway Museum, which operates short excursion trains out of the Lenox station, is interested in extending its trips along the old Housatonic Railroad line and upgrading its interpretation of railroad history in the region. Some suggest restoring the recently fire-damaged Canaan railroad depot as a railroad museum. The Williams River Trail Association is seeking to

develop a recreational-heritage trail along the old rail bed of the first railroad line in the Berkshires, which connected iron mines and marble quarries of West Stockbridge with Hudson, New York.

The North West (Connecticut) Council of Governments is applying to extend the Scenic Highway designation of U.S. Route 7, which is currently applied to a small portion between Cornwall Bridge and West Cornwall, to the full stretch between Kent and the Canaan-North Canaan border.

Although the upper Housatonic Valley is not undergoing the rapid growth of other areas of the country, the region still has concerns about preserving the traditional landscape and containing unwanted sprawl. Local residents recognize that protecting the integrity of the region's "sense of place" is fundamental to community pride and economic well-being. Both Massachusetts and Connecticut have state watershed protection programs focused on the upper Housatonic that promote innovative land use and conservation efforts. Some in the area have explored how the upper Housatonic can take advantage of the programs of the Green Valley Institute, which has been established by the Quinebaug-Shetucket National Heritage Corridor and the University of Connecticut Extension Service. The Green Valley Institute works with local communities on preserving open space and containing unwanted sprawl.



Architect Stanford White designed Naumkeag, in Stockbridge, MA, for Attorney Joseph Hodges Choate in 1886.

#### **4. Provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities.**

The upper Housatonic Valley provides extensive educational opportunities for the arts and history. The many historical and cultural sites already described offer extensive opportunities for education, particularly for grades K-12. As one of the foremost cultural resorts in the country, the region has first-class musical programs at Tanglewood and its Berkshire Music Center, Music Mountain, the South Mountain Concerts, the Norfolk Music Festival, the Berkshire Choral Festival, the Aston Magna Festival, the Berkshire Mountain Music Festival, and the Berkshire Opera Company. The Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, in Becket, is the country's foremost international dance festival. The Albany Berkshire Ballet performs in Pittsfield. The public can find excellent dramatic offerings at Shakespeare & Company and the Berkshire Theatre Festival, among other venues. Arts programming and education is provided at the Berkshire Museum, Norman Rockwell Museum, Chesterwood, and other art galleries. Numerous historical buildings, such as the 1804 South Canaan Meetinghouse, offer annual programs of history talks and concerts.

As for institutions of higher education, the upper Housatonic has Simon's Rock College of Bard College and Berkshire Community College in Massachusetts. Berkshire Community College offers extensive year-round Elderhostel programs that emphasize the region's cultural offerings. There are numerous high-quality private preparatory and public schools. An unusual educational resource is the National Archives and Records Administration Silvio O. Conte Center in Pittsfield, which allows the public to search genealogical and other federal records on microfilm.

Members of the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, Inc. have indicated that there are several topic areas that appear promising for further research and interpretation because of both their important content and local interest in the topic. They include further research into history of local African Americans (a substantial portion of the *Glory* Civil War regiment came from the Housatonic Valley), local educational institutions (first school for American Indians, at Cornwall, established prep schools, early regional high schools), the region's religious history from 18th-century Puritan or-



**Fly Fishing on the Housatonic River, West Cornwall, CT**



thodoxy through revivalism to abolitionism and social reform, and the role of local communities and individuals in World War II (Tri-Corners History Council has collected dozens of oral histories). There also are opportunities for coordinating a regional database cataloging local photographic collections and folk art collections and developing educational materials for grades K-12 on such local history topics as religion, medicine, and women and the home. This would involve breaking new ground in researching local history.

There are extensive recreational opportunities in the region. The Housatonic River itself offers many places for fishing and boating, particularly whitewater kayaking. Currently, the river's dams are undergoing relicensing under the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). One proposed management alternative would be to allow the run of the river, meaning that water would no longer be impounded behind dams and released at predetermined times. Some environmentalists and fishermen advocate for this. The end of scheduled releases, however, could adversely affect kayaking and canoeing. The water in the river, especially during relatively dry seasons, would be inadequate to accommodate recreational boating. If the run-of-the-river alternative were adopted, boating could still take place in some areas of the river.



Ski jumping competitions have been taking place at Salisbury, CT, for decades.

There are numerous lakes and ponds in both Connecticut and Massachusetts that are suitable for swimming. The many country roads provide places for biking. The extensive state parks, private nonprofit nature preserves, and walking trails along the Housatonic River provide virtually unlimited opportunities for hiking.

The segment of the Appalachian Trail in the upper Housatonic Valley offers a particularly rich opportunity for experiencing the region's natural and cultural resources. Appalachian Mountain Club Director of Conservation Peg Brady has written that the Appalachian Trail would be a "key feature" in an Upper Housatonic Valley Heritage Area because "In Connecticut, much of the trail runs along the Housatonic River and in Massachusetts the southern half of the Appalachian Trail is within the watershed of the upper Housatonic Valley." The Connecticut section of the trail in Sharon and Kent is the longest "riverwalk" on the entire Appalachian Trail. Another series of scenic hiking trails in the area traverses the Taconic Range, situated along the New York-Massachusetts border. They are the Taconic Crest Trail, Taconic Skyline Trail, and South Taconic Trail. Each state park in Massachusetts and Connecticut has trails for hiking. The Connecticut state parks each offer public walks on National Trails Day in early June. The extensive network of trails in the upper Housatonic Valley will enable the area to be part of the New England Greenway Vision Plan, the country's first multi-state regional greenway network. It is being promoted by the American Society of Landscape Architects.

There are various cross-country ski facilities and downhill ski facilities at Bosquet Ski Area, Pittsfield; Catamount Ski Area, South Egremont; Jiminy Peak, Hancock; Ski Butternut, Great Barrington; Mohawk Mountain, Cornwall.

**5. Contains resources important to the identified theme or themes of the study area that retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation.**

There are several themes that have been identified as important to the heritage of the upper Housatonic Valley. For each theme there are many resources that are capable of interpreting those themes, as is described below.

#### A. CULTURAL RESORT

**LITERATURE AND ART**—There are several museums and historic houses dedicated to writers and artists. Arrowhead, in Pittsfield, was the home of novelist Herman Melville between 1850 and 1863. Melville wrote *Moby Dick* there. The Mount, at Lenox, was novelist Edith Wharton's summer house and an embodiment of the design principles she espoused in her book *The Decoration of Houses*. The Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, provides a comprehensive collection of Rockwell's paintings and illustrations. Daniel Chester French's Chesterwood, in Stockbridge, exhibits the sculptor's work as well as that of contemporary artists. Architect Henry Bacon, who collaborated with French on the Lincoln Memorial, designed Chesterwood. Sculptor Henry Hudson Kitson's house Santarella, Tyingham, displays his work. The Freylinghuysen Morris House & Studio (considered one of the first Modernist structures in New England), Lenox, shows the work of abstract modernists Suzy Freylinghuysen and George L.K. Morris. The Sloane-Stanley Museum in Kent displays the work of illustrator Eric Sloane. The Berkshire Museum, in Pittsfield, is a comprehensive regional museum with offerings in painting, natural science, history, and cinema.

**CULTURAL PERFORMANCE VENUES**—The upper Housatonic Valley has a number of world-class cultural institutions led by Tanglewood,

summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Music Mountain has been a preeminent summer chamber music festival since 1930, and today it also offers jazz performances. Pittsfield's South Mountain Concerts have been offered at the Temple of Music since Elizabeth Coolidge initiated them in 1918. Various classical music series (today, the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival) have been offered on the Stoeckel-Battell Estate, in Norfolk, since 1899. The Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival hosts a prestigious schedule of dance companies from around the world at a landmark-status rustic campus in Becket. The Berkshire Theatre Festival has operated at Stanford White's Stockbridge Casino for many years. Shakespeare & Company has produced Shakespearean plays and other drama in Lenox since the late 1970s.

#### B. SHAPING A SCENIC LANDSCAPE

There are extensive examples of nature conservation, including state parks and private conservation areas, as well as the Appalachian Trail. See the descriptions of important natural resources in preceding Section 3, Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area Description, and Section 4, Key Interpretive Themes Relating to the Nation's and the Region's History (B. Shaping a Scenic Landscape). For the most part, the conservation history of these sites is not interpreted, cultural resources are not emphasized, and connections are not made with other sites in the region. The Heritage Area program could tap the interpretive potential of the state parks and private conservation areas.

Carol Owens's book *The Berkshire Cottages* (1984) explained that of the approximately 75 summer estates built by wealthy families in the late 19th and 20th centuries in the upper Housatonic Valley, a large number survive. Joseph Choate's Naumkeag House & Gardens, Stockbridge, is a Stanford White designed masterpiece open to the public. Edith Wharton's recently restored home The Mount, in Lenox, was influential in turning American taste away from heavy, ornate Victorianism to lighter, more classical designs. Lenox's Ventfort Hall, which was owned by J.P. Morgan's sister, is being restored and made into the Museum of the Gilded Age. The Merwin House, a museum in Stockbridge, is an example of an 1820s farmhouse that was turned into a summer retreat by



Daniel Chester French (1850-1931), sculptor of the Lincoln Memorial "Seated Lincoln," spent many summers working at his Chesterwood studio in Stockbridge, MA.

wealthy New Yorkers. Other remaining mansions include resorts or inns at Blantyre, Eastover, Cranwell, Wyndhurst, Wheatleigh, Orleton, Pine Acre, and Bellefontaine (Canyon Ranch health spa). The Berkshire Scenic Railway Museum, Lenox, interprets the story of the Housatonic Railroad, which opened the area up to resort development in the mid-19th century.

The Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway (U.S. Route 20), which runs through Lee and Becket (outside of the upper Housatonic Valley, the route also traverses Chester, Huntington, and Russell), was part of the first stagecoach turnpike (1800) that linked Boston with Albany. It became the country's first modern mountain crossing for automobiles, when it was paved in 1910 and dubbed the Jacob's Ladder Trail. The Jacob's Ladder Trail was the idea of wealthy Lenox summer resident Cortland Field Bishop, of The Winter Palace, who wanted to make the 1,775-foot summit passable for motorists. The steep incline of the road in Becket was called Jacob's Ladder because its mountainside switchbacks resembled ladder rungs reminiscent of the Biblical vision of Jacob envisioning a ladder to heaven (a large rock at the bottom on the incline was called Jacob's Pillow, which has given its name to the famed summer dance festival).

#### C. CRADLE OF INDUSTRY

IRON INDUSTRY—Northwest Connecticut was the heart of the Salisbury District of ironmaking. Of 44 iron furnaces operating in the upper Housatonic Valley between 1735 and 1923, portions of six furnaces remain. The Beckley Furnace State Park, East Canaan (operated 1847-1918) is the best preserved iron furnace. Connecticut recognized the importance of the Beckley Furnace when it designated it the state's only Industrial Monument and appropriated funds for its preservation. The Holley-Williams House Museum, Lakeville, at the center of the Lakeville National Historic District, tells the story of the area's leading iron-making community. The Amesville Ironworks Trail, at the Great Falls of the Housatonic in Canaan, tells the story of the demolished Civil War-era cannon factory. The Lime Rock National Register Historic District, the home of the Barnum Richardson Company, which manufactured railroad car wheels, has several well-preserved buildings. All these sites are linked by the Iron Heritage Trail.

The Connecticut Antique Machinery Association Museum, Kent, includes the Mining and Mineral Museum, which explains the history of iron mining in the region. Also at this site is the Kent Iron Furnace (1826-1892) and the Sloane-Stanley Museum, which includes an outstanding collection of Early American iron tools and the studio of artist and Americana-collector Eric Sloane.

PAPER INDUSTRY—The oldest active paper company in the country is Crane and Company, which still makes the paper for U.S. currency. Crane's Old Stone Mill Rag Room, Dalton, is a papermaking museum that is a national historic landmark. There are many other paper mills and paper industry sites in the region that could become elements of a Paper Industry Heritage Trail.

ELECTRICAL GENERATION INDUSTRY—The foremost 20th-century industry in the region was General Electric's manufacturing of electrical generation equipment in Pittsfield. This industry originated with William Stanley's first successful demonstration of an alternating current (AC) transformer in Great Barrington in 1886. Besides its advances in electrical equipment, General Electric also made important innovations in plastics at Pittsfield. The downsizing of General Electric since the 1980s has hurt the local economy, and PCBs released by the plant have polluted the Housatonic River. The full history of the electrical equipment industry in the region has yet to be told. The electrical industry has the potential for becoming an important part of the heritage area. Many of the historical structures at the Pittsfield General Electric plant still stand, though General Electric is demolishing some of the vacant buildings and cleaning up toxic wastes. It will provide Pittsfield a 52-acre site for future economic development.

#### D. THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR ERA AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRACY

The Upper Housatonic Valley has an extensive collection of historic buildings dating as far back as 1735, when English settlement began in the area. The historic town centers have a plethora of meetinghouses, commons, houses, and public buildings, many of which are on the National Register of Historic Places. There are three covered bridges in the region—the West Cornwall

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*"The Mount was to give me country cares and joys, long happy rides and drives through wooded lanes of that loveliest region, the companionship of a few dear friends, and the freedom from trivial obligations which was necessary if I was to go on with my writing."*

Edith Wharton,  
*A Backward Glance*

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Covered Bridge, Bull's Bridge in Kent, and the Sheffield Covered Bridge. Historic houses from the period that are open as museums include: Bidwell House, a 1750 parsonage in Monterey; the 1735 Colonel John Ashley House, in Sheffield, which was one of the first houses in Berkshire County and the site of the drafting of the Sheffield Declaration of 1773; the Revolutionary War-era Dan Raymond House, in Sheffield; and the Gay-Hoyt House, of the Sharon Historical Society, which was built in 1775 by Colonel Ebenezer Gay, who was commander of Sharon Militia at Saratoga.

#### E. ADDITIONAL HERITAGE THEMES

**MOHICAN INDIAN HERITAGE**—Stockbridge's Mission House was the home of Reverend John Sergeant, who oversaw a mission to convert local Indians to Christianity starting in 1734. This was a center for a Christian Indian community until it departed to the west in 1783, eventually relocating to Wisconsin as the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians. The Mission House has an exhibit on the local Mohicans. An Indian burial site, with a marker erected by the Laurel Hill Association in 1877, is located in Stockbridge. Archaeological sites exist in the area, but are not suitable for public visitation.

**SHAKER CULTURE**—The well-preserved Hancock Shaker Village community existed from 1783 until 1960, when it closed. Hancock Shaker Village is a museum that interprets Shaker history and demonstrates crafts.

**6. Includes residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and local and state governments who are involved in the planning, have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants, including the Federal Government, and have demonstrated support for the concept of a national heritage area.**

The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, Inc. is a nonprofit organization incorporated in 2000 in order to promote the development of the upper Housatonic Valley as a national heritage area. UHVNHA had its origins with the Tri-Corners History Council, which was formed in 1995 to coordinate local historical and cultural activities in northwestern Connecticut, southwestern Massachusetts, and the adjacent

area of New York. The Tri-Corners History Council initiated efforts to seek national heritage area designation in 1999.

Since then, UHVNHA has taken the lead, developing a board of directors, a board of advisors, and a broad-based membership of cultural and environmental organizations, local communities, civic organizations, and interested individuals. UHVNHA members include the Appalachian Trail Conference, Appalachian Mountain Club, Housatonic Valley Association, Housatonic River Commission, Housatonic River Restoration, Berkshire Natural Resources Council, Massachusetts Audubon Society, and Trustees of Reservations. Over 70 organizations in the region have endorsed the heritage area idea and become members of UHVNHA (see Appendix V). The Litchfield Hills Tourism Bureau has expressed its support. Boards and commissions in over 20 cities and towns and Mayor Sarah Hathaway of Pittsfield have expressed their support. State legislators and agency officials in both Connecticut and Massachusetts support the heritage area.

UHVNHA has distributed newsletters to organizations and individuals throughout the upper Housatonic Valley. The Heritage Themes Workshop, organized by the group and held in November 2001, attracted a large and enthusiastic number of participants.

UHVNHA already has identified four information center locations for distributing brochures. They are at existing cultural sites: Arrowhead, Pittsfield; Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge; the Academy Building of the Salisbury Association, Salisbury; and Sloane-Stanley Museum, Kent.

There is significant support for the heritage area concept because it complements the local economy, which is heavily reliant on tourism, education, the arts, farming, and certain types of manufacturing. A heritage area would enhance the quality of historical, cultural, and natural attractions and increase connections among them. (There is a widespread acceptance by local interest groups that the natural environment, the arts, and local history are inextricably linked.) The Heritage Area could promote conservation of historic and natural resources and provide new

activities for people living and vacationing in the region. These amenities could attract businesses and individuals to an area that is seeking to enhance its economy. Since the region already has a substantial tourism industry, the heritage area program would not be expected to significantly expand the tourism sector. But it would enhance the visitor experience being offered.

Other heritage area goals expressed by participants in the planning process include: strengthening the region's identity; increasing public awareness of local history and the need for preservation; encouraging research on local history and its incorporation into the educational curriculum; enhancing the quality of community character. The proposed heritage area could renew a sense of public "ownership" of the long-polluted Housatonic River, forge partnerships between neighboring communities in Connecticut and Massachusetts, and control development pressures. An increased appreciation of the historical impact of the electrical industry and other heritage themes could enhance Pittsfield's self-understanding, its community image, and its capacity for future development.

Even though the upper Housatonic Valley is not seeking a substantial increase in tourism from a heritage area—local citizens have voiced con-

cerns that a new national heritage area not induce impacts that could damage existing communities or natural resources—visitation would most likely increase to some degree. Heritage initiatives could increase lengths of stay and spending patterns, since heritage tourists tend to spend more, stay in hotels more often, visit more destinations, and stay longer than other types of tourists.

The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area already has a strong collaborative tradition in the area that it can benefit from. The chief executive officers of 13 leading cultural institutions in the Berkshires, the Berkshire Cultural Strategic Planning Committee, have met monthly for years to discuss common issues. The public relations officers at 47 cultural and historic organizations have met as the Cultural Alliance. These organizations are helping develop the proposed heritage area.

The Upper Housatonic National Heritage Area could draw upon a large base of volunteers. As a retirement and second-home area, the upper Housatonic Valley has many people with the time and interest to commit to serving nonprofit cultural ventures. Hundreds of volunteers already serve the historical, cultural, and environmental sites described above. Many have



Norman Rockwell's Studio has been incorporated into the Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, MA.





**The Housatonic River in Northwest Connecticut**

expressed interest in the heritage area concept, believing that it can bolster the activities of their respective institutions.

The involvement of Connecticut and Massachusetts state environmental and historical officials points out that a heritage area can promote and take advantage of various state programs, including open space acquisition, trails development, brownfields redevelopment, environmental education and planning, water pollution cleanup, and historic preservation programs.

**7. Has a potential management entity to work in partnership with residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and local and state governments to develop a national heritage area consistent with continued local and state economic activity.**

The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, Inc. has been developing the capacity to manage the proposed national heritage area. The organization has undertaken extensive outreach to nonprofit organizations, local and state government, economic development groups, and local residents that is evident from its widespread membership. Its active board of directors and board of advisors represent a broad cross-section of regional interests. With a membership of more than 70 private institutions, including most of the leading cultural and civic organizations in the region and most of the municipalities, UHVNHA has the capacity to convene most of the region's major players. The UHVNHA board has indicated a willingness to enlarge itself to include new interests and partners that have been identified during the study process. To serve as the management entity for the national heritage area, UHVNHA has been increasing its institutional capacity by working on a long-range financial plan and planning to hire a professional executive director.

The management organization would be responsible for preparing a heritage area plan, establishing priority actions, conducting public meetings regarding planning and implementation, and implementing the plan in partnership

with others. It would have legal authority to receive federal funds, disburse federal funds to other organizations and units of government, account for federal funds received and disbursed, and enter into agreements with the federal government and other organizations.

**8. Has a conceptual boundary map that is supported by the public.**

The study area map that shows the conceptual boundaries of the proposed Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area may be found on page 9. It has been developed in Geographic Information System (GIS) format by the Housatonic Valley Association and the National Park Service. The original study area for the proposed Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area consists of 26 communities stretching from Kent, CT, to Dalton, MA. The upper Housatonic Valley has long had an environmental, economic, and social cohesion, even though it covers two states. The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, Inc., which has been promoting the heritage area concept for several years and has undertaken extensive outreach across the region, has found that basing the proposed heritage area boundaries on the watershed boundaries makes sense.

In the course of this feasibility study, several communities have made a case for expanding the original proposed heritage area boundaries. Additional towns seeking inclusion in the heritage area are Becket and Hancock, MA, and Colebrook, CT. Becket and Hancock are partly located in the upper Housatonic Valley watershed and have institutions that are reflective of the major heritage themes. The Hancock Shaker Village, on the Pittsfield-Hancock line, is a major museum of Shaker culture. Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, in Becket, has been one of the leading cultural institutions in Berkshire County since its founding by Ted Shawn in 1933. Colebrook, CT, is outside of the upper Housatonic watershed, but it abuts the watershed. Colebrook has a significant iron industry site that ties it to the Salisbury (CT) District iron industry that supplied the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.

# Review of Existing Heritage Area Management Models and Comparison with the Upper Housatonic Valley

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There are several national heritage areas in New England and New York that can provide useful lessons related to interpretive themes and management models:

## **Blackstone Valley National Historic Corridor**

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor was established in 1986. It was the second National Heritage Corridor in the country. The Corridor stretches along the 46-mile Blackstone River/Canal through 24 communities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island between Worcester and Providence. It is noted for being the first industrialized waterway in the country and includes the first textile mill in America, Samuel Slater's mill at Pawtucket, RI (1790). The corridor is managed by a 19-member bi-state, federally appointed commission. National Park Service staff manages and interprets the corridor. Both Massachusetts and Rhode Island have supported the corridor, participated in its management, and made significant investments in its development. Over 250 partners, including local governments, businesses, museums, academic institutions, conservation groups, and the media, have been involved in the corridor's development.

The corridor's achievements have included the creation of four information centers in historic buildings, a corridor-wide signage and identity program, preservation of several historic buildings and sites, and year-round interpretive programs led by NPS rangers and volunteers. An excursion boat, the *Blackstone Valley Explorer*, and the interstate Blackstone Bikeway are popular venues for interpretive tours. Visioning workshops have encouraged the region's communities to take a proactive approach to planning, environmental management, infrastructure, and economic development issues.

## **Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor**

Designated in 1994, Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Includes 35 towns (originally there were 24 towns in Connecticut only) with 850 square

miles in northeastern Connecticut and south central Massachusetts. The Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc. is the nonprofit organization designated to receive the corridor's federal funding and manage its activities. The Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor calls itself "The Last Green Valley" between Washington and Boston. It has developed walking and cycling trails, a heritage site trail, a signage program, brochure publication, and a popular annual Walking Weekend. The heritage corridor has stimulated economic development, including the adaptive reuse of old mill buildings, agricultural preservation, and the purchase of open space. It has helped the area take important steps in enhancing its livability.

The heritage corridor is governed by a board with 15 members representing local organizations and state officials. The heritage corridor's partners include the National Park Service, the Connecticut Humanities Council, state historic commissions, state environmental protection and transportation agencies, regional planning and tourism agencies, and local economic development organizations. The heritage corridor has several active committees with broad citizen participation.

## **Essex National Heritage Area, Essex County, Massachusetts**

Designated in 1996, the Essex National Heritage Area encompasses 500 square miles and 34 cities and towns in northeastern Massachusetts. The heritage area is managed by the 118-member (26 are state and federal legislators serving ex officio) Essex National Heritage Commission. Every municipality has a representative. Business, tourism, preservation, educational, and environmental interests are also represented. A 23-member Executive Committee oversees the operations of the heritage area. The Essex Heritage Area interprets three significant themes: (1) Founding and Early Settlement, 1626-1775; (2) Height and Decline of Maritime Era, 1775-1900; (3) Textile and Leather Industries, 1830-1940. It has created an integrated heritage trail system associated with the three themes.

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*“Sportsmen, historians, anglers, environmentalists, outdoorsmen, property owners, residents, commercial users, canoeists, birdwatchers, casual hikers, and others all see themselves as constituents of the river.”*

The Housatonic River Restoration Plan, 1999

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The Essex National Heritage Area has built upon the resources at the Salem Maritime National Historic Site, which was established in 1938. The new heritage area has been designed to make the Salem Maritime National Historic Site a major hub from which visitors can travel to historic sites throughout Essex County. An organization called The Salem Partnership spearheaded the movement to establish a heritage area. The Essex National Heritage Area has used 10 existing visitor centers throughout the area for the interpretation and promotion of the thematic resources. It also coordinates special events and tours and makes grants to private nonprofit heritage organizations. The heritage



Housatonic River, Stockbridge, MA

area has a widely used educational website that encourages extensive student visitation of local heritage sites and study of heritage themes. The national designation of Essex County increases the region's visibility through promotion in National Park Service publications and links to federal websites.

#### **Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area**

Congress established this national heritage area in 1996 to recognize the national importance of the history and natural and cultural resources of the Hudson Valley. The heritage area includes ten counties stretching from Albany to New York City. The legislation authorizes the provision of federal financial and technical assistance to the State of New York and Hudson River Valley communities in preserving, protecting, and interpreting those resources. The heritage area is administered by the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council. Interpretive themes for heritage trails include (1) The Landscape of Beauty—including connections to the Hudson River painters and today's environmental movement; (2) The Landscape of Freedom—covering the American Revolution and Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt's political contributions; (3) The Landscape of Invention—covering the region's economic, agricultural, industrial, and transportation history. The heritage area is developing brochures and interpretation programs around these themes.

#### **Heritage Cape Cod (local, self-designated heritage area)**

In 1991, the Cape Cod Commission, Barnstable County's regional planning agency, established a study group with funding from the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities to develop

an approach to tourism on Cape Cod that celebrated the region's unique "sense of place." The study received extensive input from the U.S.—U.K. Countryside Exchange, which advised the Cape to focus on its "heritage," namely its historical, cultural, and environmental resources. The Cape Cod Commission, Cape Cod National Seashore, and approximately 40 nonprofit museums and historical societies established the Heritage Cape Cod program, which became an independent private nonprofit umbrella group. The participants considered seeking national heritage area status, but decided that the process might take too long and that the partners in the effort could achieve the heritage goals effectively on their own. It was thought that Cape Cod already had a strongly defined image and did not require federal heritage area designation to highlight its resources.

Since 1993, Heritage Cape Cod has published an annual map and guide to heritage attractions and events. The initiative has sponsored an annual Heritage Week (third week of June) and Maritime Week (third week of May), with dozens of walking tours, reenactments, historic open houses, concerts, and presentations. Maritime Week played a major role in preserving several Cape Cod lighthouses for public access. The Heritage Cape Cod program has increased attendance at heritage sites and has spurred the creation of significant new annual programs for local residents and visitors.

In recent years, the Heritage Cape Cod program has had a budget of \$60,000-100,000 (not including in-kind personnel). Funds have been obtained from the Cape Cod Commission, the Massachusetts Cultural Council Cultural Economic Development program, the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism, and local business sponsors. The funding has supported the publication and distribution of 100,000 copies of the annual *Heritage Guide* and the organization of Heritage Week and Maritime Week. Recently, the Heritage Cape Cod program has been merged into the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod to create greater synergy with the region's vibrant cultural sector. The Heritage Cape Cod program would not have survived without ongoing support from the Cape Cod Commission and the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod.

### **National Heritage Area Lessons for the Upper Housatonic Valley**

The upper Housatonic Valley has similarities and differences from these heritage areas that can be instructive in formulating a management approach for the upper Housatonic Valley.

**BI-STATE HERITAGE AREAS**—There are two heritage corridors in New England that contain parts of two states, as the upper Housatonic Valley does—the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley in Connecticut and Massachusetts, and the Blackstone Valley in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Both heritage corridors demonstrate how they can be effective in coordinating common projects in a region that straddles two states. They recognize that regions have environmental, social, and economic characteristics that transcend state lines. Quinebaug-Shetucket covers the same two states as the upper Housatonic Valley, Connecticut and Massachusetts, indicating the capability of jurisdictions covering these states to work effectively.

**HERITAGE AREAS WITH THEMATIC SIMILARITIES**—Many national heritage areas, including Essex and the Hudson River Valley, have multiple themes, similar to the upper Housatonic Valley. These heritage areas demonstrate how a region can incorporate several major themes effectively. A heritage area need not have a single unifying element or theme, as in the case of the Blackstone River/Canal or the Erie Canal.

The upper Housatonic Valley's iron industry sub-theme is related to the Rivers of Steel Heritage Area in southwestern Pennsylvania and the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor. Situated in Greater Pittsburgh, Rivers of Steel tells the story of America's foremost steel-producing region. The southwestern Pennsylvania steel industry, which flourished with the development of the Bessemer steel-making process after the Civil War, put the upper Housatonic iron industry out of business. Ironically, it was Alexander Lyman Holley, of the Salisbury iron dynasty, who brought the Bessemer steel process from Britain to America; but he brought it to Pennsylvania instead of his home in the upper Housatonic Valley. The Saugus (MA) Iron Works National Historic Site tells the story of 17th-century iron-making, a process much



closer to the small-scale iron-making of the upper Housatonic than the mass production steel industry of Pennsylvania.

The use, protection, and cultural celebration of the natural landscape is a major theme in the upper Housatonic Valley. The national park site that most closely parallels this landscape conservation theme is the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, in Woodstock, VT. Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP provides some useful lessons for interpreting the history of the changing Northeast natural landscape.

**MANAGEMENT ENTITY MODELS**—Each heritage area has developed its own organizational approach based upon existing institutions and management needs.

The Quinebaug-Shetucket and the Essex National Heritage Areas may offer the most useful management examples for the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area. Quinebaug-Shetucket is managed by a private non-profit organization, Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc. It has a governing board of 15 members representing local organizations and state government officials. The organization has over 230 members, who elect board members annually. This management model is locally responsive and flexible in being able to carry out the work of the heritage area.

The Essex National Heritage Area is overseen by a large 118-member commission, with representation from each municipality and every relevant business, tourism, preservation, educational, and environmental organization in the region. A 23-member Executive Committee oversees the

operations of the heritage area. The Essex National Heritage Area Commission ensures that a wide array of community, economic development, and heritage interests have input into the management of the area, while having a smaller executive committee oversee the day-to-day operations of the heritage area. The Heritage Area Commission originated in the planning phases of the project when the local congressman invited chief elected officials from municipalities to participate. This formal level of participation for municipal officials does not appear to be desired in the upper Housatonic Valley.

The Hudson River Valley already had an organization in place that seemed most appropriate for carrying forth the management of the national heritage area—the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council. The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor is administered by a federally appointed commission. It requires congressional appointment of Commission members. This management approach was used when national heritage areas were first established, in the 1980s, but it seems somewhat unwieldy for the upper Housatonic Valley.

The National Park Service provides funding to heritage areas. It publicizes these areas as part of the national park system, but the management decisions are made by the local management-entity board. Only in the case of Blackstone Valley are there NPS rangers assigned to the area. Essex (Salem Maritime NHS) and the Hudson River Valley (Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS and Martin Van Buren NHS) have NPS sites that provide interpretation and ranger services in the heritage area.



Bartholomew's Cobble, Ashley Falls, MA

# Upper Housatonic Valley Heritage Area Management Alternatives

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This discussion of management alternatives is integrated with the environmental assessment (EA), which follows in this study.

## **Alternative 1: Continuation of Current Practices**

No federal designation or additional authority for federal involvement would be pursued under this option. Given available funding, existing entities could continue (and possibly expand) their efforts to preserve and enhance heritage resources. The resources currently owned and operated by nonprofits and local, state, and federal government would continue to be maintained and made available for public use under existing policies.

There would be no new NPS program dedicated exclusively to providing technical assistance and no additional federal funding. The only NPS unit in the area, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, would maintain existing operations. Federal programs, such as the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, the National Historic Landmarks program, the Federal Highway Administration, and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), would continue to be available to entities within the region on a competitive basis.

State and local government, private nonprofit organizations and foundations, and for-profit organizations would continue to be the primary sources of funds for the protection and interpretation of heritage resources. It should be pointed out that neither Massachusetts nor Connecticut have established their own heritage areas (as have Pennsylvania and New York). Federally designated heritage areas are the only ones within those states. Budget constraints make it problematical whether either state would create a heritage area in the upper Housatonic Valley on its own.

As with every management alternative, existing land use regulation and policies would remain under the auspices of existing governmental agencies.

The main disadvantage of this alternative is that the size of the region and its varied jurisdictions and perspectives make it difficult to exchange information and ideas, coordinate activities, develop a regional identity, tell the stories of complex heritage themes, and link heritage sites. Without a committed regional organization dedicated to the task, it would be difficult to achieve these objectives. The general lack of connection between thematically related sites in the region would continue. This management alternative would be unlikely to generate new visitation to heritage attractions and the ensuing economic development benefits that could ensue.

## **Alternative 2: National Heritage Area**

The national heritage area management alternative entails congressional designation of the upper Housatonic Valley as a national heritage area. Under this alternative, the National Park Service would provide technical assistance to the management entity of the heritage area and its associated partners, and support for the development of heritage area interpretation and identity programs.

Designation as a national heritage area would recognize the role of the upper Housatonic Valley in American history. A heritage area could help strengthen the sense of identity both within the region itself and for outside visitors. This designation can lend coherence to a cultural and geographical region whose boundaries do not correspond to state lines. The regional approach can encourage the protection and management of complex resources.

The formal structure of a heritage area can help ensure that participating governments and organizations, with their different needs, have an institutionalized process for coordinating actions. It can help provide the stability required for long-range goals to be achieved. The management functions would be centralized to avoid duplication of services and fulfill the need for ongoing and effective communication. A national

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*“The preservation movement has one great curiosity. There is never retrospective controversy or regret.*

*Preservationists are the only people in the world who are invariably confirmed in their wisdom after the fact.”*

John Kenneth Galbraith, *Boston Globe*, February 11, 2002

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heritage area can help the upper Housatonic Valley realize many of the region’s goals that have been discussed earlier in this study. Heritage area goals include: strengthening the region’s identity; increasing public awareness of local history and the need for preservation; encouraging research on local history and its incorporation into the educational curriculum; enhancing the quality of community character; renewing a sense of public “ownership” of the long-polluted Housatonic River; and revitalizing the industrial city of Pittsfield.

The National Park Service would enter into a partnership with the heritage area’s management entity to support the purposes of the National Heritage Area. The management entity would be responsible for receiving and disbursing federal funds and would have authority to enter into agreements with the Federal Government. The management entity would be responsible for



The South Canaan Meetinghouse hosts cultural programs during the summer, including jazz concerts.

raising funds to match the federal financial assistance. Federal, state, local, and private historical and cultural sites and natural areas within the heritage area would operate under their own authority and, as appropriate, in partnership with the management entity.

The relationship between the heritage area and the National Park Service usually is authorized for no longer than 10 years. After federal funding ceases, the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area would continue to exist, receiving funding from other sources.

The federally designated management entity would include a cross-section of public and private interests. It would include representatives of state government, municipalities, historic, cultural, and environmental organizations, economic development organizations, educational institutions, and private citizens. The coordinating entity would prepare a heritage area management plan, prioritize projects, implement the plan in conjunction with partners, and conduct public meetings regarding implementation.

The NPS could provide the communities and cultural, historical, and natural resource organizations within the heritage area with technical assistance and grants for education, interpretation, historic preservation, planning, recreational trail development, and open space conservation. This program would place special emphasis on activities that would serve as model projects. NPS staff would be assigned to provide technical assistance to the heritage area. NPS programs, such as Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assis-

tance, the Boston Support Office, the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, the Building Conservation Center, and the Northeast Museum Services Center, would be available for project work subject to appropriated funds.

The management entity would be required to provide a 50 percent match to the federal funding. Other federal programs, including the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), administered by the Federal Highway Administration, state, and municipal agencies, and private nonprofit and for-profit organizations, could provide funding for the heritage area.

The management entity, drawing on NPS resources, would develop an accessible and comprehensive interpretive and identity program for the heritage area's resources. Its projects could include:

- A signage system including both directional and interpretive signage. A logo-based directional signage system would embrace highways, local routes, and specific destinations. This signage system could contribute to a full interpretive program including wayside exhibits and other interpretive media. It would be keyed to interpreting the major regional themes identified by the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area.

- Heritage area publications such as informational brochures with maps and comprehensive guides similar to the NPS series of park guides.

- Interpretive training provided by NPS to ensure a consistent standard for interpretive programming in the national heritage area. Individual sites in the heritage area would continue to be responsible for their own interpretation.

- Establishment of information centers in the heritage area that would make available a wide array of information concerning attractions, interpretive programs, directions and maps, and food and lodging. The management entity would develop the visitor centers, but would not manage their day-to-day operations. Visitor centers would be at existing information centers, chambers of commerce, public buildings, and participating cultural institutions. Four information center locations are currently being proposed by UHVNHA.

- Development of educational materials for interpreting the heritage area's themes to students.

- Support for research, inventories, and documentation of heritage resources.



There are three covered bridges spanning the Upper Housatonic River. This covered bridge is at West Cornwall, CT.

The management entity could also undertake demonstration projects. These projects could range from historic preservation and adaptive reuse efforts to the development of traveling education kits and other educational outreach services. These projects could serve as models demonstrating appropriate standards for development and visitor services.

The heritage area management entity would be eligible to make grants to local heritage sites from a designated pool of funds. Grants would be made to organizations carrying out projects identified in the heritage area management plan.

Designation of a national heritage area would not entail federal acquisition of land. The national heritage area designation would not change private property ownership or local decision-making about land use, nor would it change existing land use regulations.

The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area Inc., a private nonprofit organization, is the leading candidate to be designated the management entity for the proposed heritage area. UHVNHA has been developing the broad-based support and management expertise to be responsible for managing the heritage area, developing a heritage area management plan, and working in partnership with the National Park Service. UHVNHA has served as the local project committee for the heritage area feasibility study. The organization has organized local history fairs to highlight the resources of historical museums and organizations in the region.

Comparable organizations have become management entities for other heritage areas. The closest parallel is the nonprofit Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc., which developed from the original advocacy committee and the planning commission established by the Governor of Connecticut that promoted heritage area designation. The Essex National Heritage Area had its origins with a local community development organization called The Salem Partnership.

Other examples include the Steel Industry Heritage Corporation, Inc., which was the planning and then the management entity for the Steel Industry American Heritage Area/Rivers of Steel,

in the Pittsburgh area. The Ohio & Erie Canal Association became the managing organization for the Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor. The Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council and the Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley are the co-managers of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. Regional non-profit heritage organizations have the perceived advantages over government commissions of being more politically benign, being able to forge effective partnerships with a broad range of organizations, and being able to implement the heritage area program in an expeditious and less costly fashion.

Another management alternative, which is not being presented, would be to create a federal commission, as has been adopted in the Blackstone Valley National Historic Corridor and the Delaware and Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor. The main distinction between a federal commission and a private nonprofit organization is that the federal commission would be established by Congress and representatives from a cross-section of public and private interests would be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior.

### **Alternative 3: Privately Organized Heritage Area**

This alternative would rely upon the establishment of a private nonprofit entity, comparable to Heritage Cape Cod, Inc., which would promote heritage activities in the upper Housatonic Valley. This management model would require less formal organization and less funding than a national heritage area. Since the nonprofit organization would not have to obtain Congressional approval, satisfy federal standards, or go through annual congressional funding cycles, it could proceed with its initiatives more quickly. Under this scenario, the local heritage organization would not have to obtain a 50 percent match for federal funding. If local support and budgets were not sufficient to support a national heritage area, this model could prove effective in implementing such heritage projects as brochures, walking tours, and festivals. However, a private nonprofit heritage organization would be unable to develop a regional signage program, visitor centers, and exhibits and extensive research and interpretation of heritage themes.



The downside to this alternative is that it would not provide federal funding, which could reach one million dollars per year or more for up to 10 years. A private nonprofit heritage organization would have substantially less prestige than a national heritage area. The upper Housatonic Valley would not receive the beneficial publicity from being associated with the National Park Service. It would be less likely to attract local financial support and participation in special initiatives and to draw new visitors to the region. The area would not be able to draw on the assistance from the NPS for planning and interpretation that is provided to national heritage areas around the country. The lack of federal designation might make it difficult to gain a share of funding from the state governments of Connecticut and Massachusetts. A locally established private nonprofit heritage program might lack the resources to interpret the major heritage themes identified in this study.

Heritage Cape Cod has persisted because of the ongoing financial and personnel support of the Cape Cod Commission and the Arts Foundation of Cape Cod. At this point, no comparable organizational support is apparent in the upper Housatonic Valley.

It should be noted that all the federal technical assistance and local aid programs enumerated in Alternative 1 (Continuation of Current Practices) would be available to upper Housatonic Valley communities under Alternative 3.

**Estimated Budget for Proposed National Heritage Area—Alternative 2**

As a part of this study, preliminary cost estimates have been developed for Alternative 2: Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area. They are based upon budget figures prepared for other

national heritage areas and are subject to considerable refinement and modification as the planning process progresses. The management entity would be responsible for leveraging a match of at least 50 percent to the federal contribution to the heritage area.

If designated, the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area would seek annual federal funding for 10 years. Over the course of 10 years of federal involvement, the planning and development costs would be one-time expenditures and the operational costs would be incurred annually. It is difficult to assign a specific figure to Special Projects at this time because they have not been fully identified and costed out.

ANNUAL COSTS	
Personnel/travel/office equipment	\$200,000
Publication of brochures/maps	50,000
Grants to heritage area nonprofits	250,000
Special events organization	50,000
Office rental	24,000
TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$574,000

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS	
Management Plan	\$400,000
Signage Program (Design/Install)	500,000
Outfitting Visitor Centers	450,000
Exhibits (Design/Development)	250,000
Special Projects	2,500,000
TOTAL	\$4,100,000

ANNUAL OPERATIONS	
(\$574,000 x 10 years)	\$5,740,000
Planning & Development Projects	4,100,000
TOTAL TEN-YEAR BUDGET	\$9,840,000

## Feasibility Study Conclusion

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The criteria for evaluating a national heritage area in the upper Housatonic Valley were enumerated in Public Law 106-470. These criteria reflect guidelines for designating national heritage areas that have been developed by the National Park Service. The upper Housatonic Valley meets all the criteria for establishing a national heritage area. It contains nationally important resources and represents important national themes. The upper Housatonic Valley is a singular geographical and cultural region that has made significant national contributions through its iron, paper, and electrical equipment industries, its environmental conservation and beautification efforts, the literary, artistic, musical, and architectural achievements, and its Revolutionary Era experience. This combination of themes and related resources would make the region suitable for national heritage area designation.

National heritage area designation could encourage preservation and interpretation of important historical themes and sites as well as enhance the region's economic development and planning initiatives.

Some local residents have voiced concern that designation of a national heritage area in the upper Housatonic Valley might duplicate existing heritage preservation efforts. The region has an extensive array of private non-profit and governmental cultural, historic, and environmental organizations. When this question was considered, participants in the study process concluded that the greatest benefit of establishing a heritage area could be better coordination of existing organizations. Study participants also have been pointed out that, although the Berkshires and the Litchfield Hills are well branded as cultural destinations, a new heritage area designation should not interfere with successful marketing efforts. It would enhance existing strengths of the area.

There is widespread support for the national heritage area designation and an understanding that it may give rise to partnerships that can enhance the region's quality of life. The large membership and extensive activities of the non-profit organization Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, Inc. indicate the feasibility of establishing a national heritage area.



Twin Lakes looking toward Bear Mountain, Salisbury, CT

# Draft Environmental Assessment

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## Introduction

Pursuant to Public Law (PL) 106-470, the National Park Service, on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior, is preparing a study requested by Congress to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing an Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, as described in this Public Law. This feasibility study is characterized by identification of alternatives for accomplishing and sustaining the establishment of such an area as outlined in the public law, through consideration of impacts to resource values and their qualities as aspects of the human environment, according to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Such resource values, impacts, and aspects have been given preliminary evaluation through public involvement to sense the potential for significant effects, whereupon a practicable depth of analysis can be made and documented as a basis for a reliable report to satisfy the Congressional request and assist in its decision making on whether or not to authorize the establishment of this national heritage area. Initially it appears that most of the common or usual aspects of the human environment would not be subject to potentially significant effect, including the resource values themselves, and only the factor of socioeconomic impact needs to be given a greater depth of understanding as having any potential for significance. Given the suitability and feasibility of authorizing this area primarily for recognition and conservation of its heritage values, without direct management as an operative unit of the national park system, the NPS feels that the processing of an environmental assessment (EA), focused on socioeconomic aspects of the human environment, would satisfactorily support the feasibility study and report of it to Congress, in keeping with NEPA.

The conceptual nature of the authorization/establishment of alternatives in this study limits the depth of impact evaluation of environmental aspects to a relatively broad analysis in this EA, in absence of appropriately detailed implementation work. If the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area were to receive federal designation, a management plan would be developed in greater detail to describe actions to be

implemented. Preparation of that management plan would be accompanied by another EA and/or environmental impact statement (EIS) for project work involving federal action where it is deemed to be major and of a significant impact to the human environment.

## Overview of Impacts to Socioeconomics in an Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area

Heritage area designation could be helpful to obtain betterment for community and economic improvements in the upper Housatonic Valley. The primary goal of a Heritage Area in the upper Housatonic Valley would be to increase appreciation of the region's history and to locally enhance the quality of life.

Even though the region's populace is not seeking a substantial growth in tourism from a heritage area—and some local people have voiced concerns that a new national heritage area could but should not induce impacts that would damage existing community environs or natural resources—visitation would likely increase to some degree. However, tourism would not increase markedly unless new or non-heritage-based, large-scale entertainment attractions were developed, which is not contemplated in or by this study.

Heritage tourism could provide economic benefits even if visitation did not increase significantly. Heritage initiatives could increase lengths of stay and spending patterns, since heritage tourists tend to spend more, stay in hotels more often, visit more destinations, and stay longer than other types of tourists. Since the early 1990s, "heritage tourism" has been one of the fastest-growing segments of tourism in the country. It is especially popular with people taking day trips and long weekends.

The experience of existing heritage areas can provide a sense of potential tourism impacts. The Southwestern Pennsylvania Heritage Preservation Commission, a national heritage area that has done extensive economic impact analysis and economic development work, has found that the economic impact from 13 heritage sites in its

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*The primary goal of a heritage area in the upper Housatonic Valley would be to increase appreciation of the region's history and to enhance the local quality of life.*

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region doubled from \$17 million in 1988 to \$34 million in 1998. Much of this stems from the fact that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Heritage Preservation Commission coordinated an aggregate investment of \$88 million at these 13 sites. Though the number of tourists did not double, the average visit length increased from 1.2 days to 3 days and the average daily expenditure per person increased from \$32 per day to \$72. The heritage area designation has made the region more attractive to visitors. It has induced greater expenditures by tourists, partly because heritage areas spawn new businesses, such as inns, restaurants, and shops, which are appealing to consumers.

The private nonprofit Heritage Cape Cod program brought about modest increases in tourism. Cape Cod Maritime Week averaged 10,000 attendees annually, with approximately 25% (2,500 visitors) coming from outside Cape

Cod and the remainder being local residents. The Cape Cod Walking Weekend attracts approximately 1,200 participants on more than 40 walking tours, with about 20% coming from outside the region. Attendance at local historical societies, such as the Dennis Historical Society's Josiah Dennis Manse and the Aptuxcet Trading Post, grew from approximately 1,500 visitors per year to around 4,000 per year due to participation in heritage events. The Heritage Cape Cod program has not attracted new visitors to the Cape as much as it has given those already living on or visiting the Cape new things to do.

There are several problems associated with estimating visitor increases in the upper Housatonic Valley due to heritage area designation. In a feasibility study, it is difficult to quantify the potential impacts to the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area without a description of future projects that a management plan would provide. Another problem involved in estimating potential impacts by heritage area designation is that it is much easier to estimate visitor increases at a specific museum or performing arts venue than across an entire heritage area. It is particularly difficult to quantify the economic impact of projects affecting the region's quality of life, such as walking trails, roadway signage, interpretive exhibits and brochures, and preserved historic landmarks. The Alliance of National Heritage Areas has been working on a methodology to analyze the impacts of heritage areas, but it is not yet available.

Despite the problems with making projections about future visitation to the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, this study makes a projection of future tourism impacts, based upon conservative assumptions developed from reviewing the experience of other heritage areas.



Green River, Great Barrington, MA

The study report's bibliography (Appendix IV) cites the sources used in the economic impact analysis.

Given that Berkshire County, MA, attracts 2.5 million visitors annually (total for Litchfield Hills, CT, is not available), not including international travelers or local day-trippers, it might be reasonable to assume a 5% visitor increase resulting from establishment of a national heritage area. This would result in 125,000 new visitors or 50,000 new visitor parties (of 2 to 3 persons each), which, for the sake of simplicity, will be counted as 50,000 additional visitor *nights*. (This would be a conservative estimate, comparable to the 100,000 new tourists projected for *The Champlain Valley Heritage Corridor Project Special Resource Study* [1999]. This study projected that the heritage area visitor would spend an extra night in the area above existing levels and that daily spending per visitor would increase by a conservative 5%.)

This study assumes a hypothetical scenario of 15,000 additional day-trip visitor parties from within the area and 15,000 day-trip visitor parties from outside the area. The added number of visitor nights and day-trippers would only come about after the heritage area had a full program of events, heritage trails, and upgraded promotion and interpretation. If significant new attractions were developed, the number of visitors could increase further.

The economic impact of these visitors will be estimated using assumptions provided by *Estimating Regional Economic Impacts of Park Visitor Spending: Money Generation Model Version 2*, a publication of the National Park Service. According to this model, visitor parties at historic sites with medium attendance are projected to spend \$138 per night if they are staying in a hotel/motel/inn. The local day-tripper spends \$24 per party, and the non-local day-tripper visitor party spends \$52. The breakdown by category of visitor party is in the Visitor Expenditures, Alternative 2: National Heritage Area chart, seen below.

The annual total tourism expenditure impact is estimated to be \$8,040,000. This amount of money represents expenditures after the heritage area became fully operational. It would increase with the creation of additional heritage offerings and increased promotion.

There also would be indirect expenditures in the local area made by businesses serving tourists. According to Massachusetts data, 66 cents is spent on secondary sales for every dollar of direct tourist expenditures. Every \$1 million in tourist expenditures creates 29 jobs. Based on these assumptions, the \$8,040,000 in direct tourism expenditures would produce an additional \$5,306,000 in indirect expenditures and 233 jobs. This is an estimate based upon conservative assumptions.

#### Visitor Expenditures, Alternative 2: National Heritage Area

Type of Visitor	Visitor Parties	Per-Day Expenditure	Total Expenditures
Overnight at lodging	50,000	\$138	\$6,900,000
Local day-tripper	15,000	24	360,000
Non-local day-tripper	15,000	52	780,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>80,000</b>		<b>\$8,040,000</b>

#### Visitor Expenditures, Alternative 3: Privately Organized Heritage Area

Type of Visitor	Visitor Parties	Per-Day Expenditure	Total Expenditures
Overnight at lodging	10,000	\$138	\$1,380,000
Local day-tripper	5,000	24	120,000
Non-local day-tripper	5,000	52	260,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,000</b>		<b>\$1,760,000</b>



If Alternative 3: Privately Organized Heritage Area were adopted, a lower number of visitors would be anticipated. A privately organized heritage area would lack the federal designation and funding that comes with a national heritage area and would be less likely to carry out preservation and interpretation projects that would attract new visitors to the area. In comparison to the estimates for Alternative 2: National Heritage Area, a privately organized heritage program is estimated to attract 10,000 additional visitor party nights (20% of heritage area overnight visitors) and 5,000 local day-trip visitor parties (33.3% of heritage area estimate) and 5,000 day-trip visitor parties from out of the area (33.3% of heritage area estimate). There would be a proportionately higher percentage of day-trippers than overnight guests because publicity and appeal would be more local in aspect, as occurred with the Heritage Cape Cod program.

According to economic impact assumptions provided in *Estimating Regional Economic Impacts of Park Visitor Spending: Money Generation Model Version 2*, visitor parties at historic sites with medium attendance are projected to spend \$138 per night if they are staying in a hotel/motel/inn. The local day-tripper spends \$24 per party, and the non-local day-trip visitor party spends \$52. The breakdown by category of visitor is in the Visitor Expenditures, Alternative 3: Privately Organized Heritage Area chart, on facing page below.

The annual total tourism expenditure impact is estimated to be \$1,760,000. Assuming that 66 cents is spent on secondary sales for every dollar of direct tourist expenditures and every \$1 million in tourist expenditures creates 29 jobs, the \$1,760,000 in direct tourism expenditures would produce an additional \$1,162,000 in indirect expenditures and 51 jobs.



The General Electric Plant in Pittsfield, MA, manufactured electric generating equipment for most of a century, before the plant was downsized in the 1980s.

Under Alternative 1: Continuation of Current Practices, no measures would be taken to attract new visitors to the area and generate the new economic impacts that would accompany them. Nevertheless, change would continue to occur in the region, but there would be no concerted preservation and interpretation measures that would accompany a national heritage area.

## Impacts of Alternatives and Features

### • ALTERNATIVE 1:

#### CONTINUATION OF CURRENT PRACTICES

##### FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT

Under this alternative, there would be no formal designation of a Heritage Area. No additional federal mechanisms for resource recognition or protection would be pursued. Federal involvement in the area would be limited to existing competitive grant and technical assistance programs.

##### ADMINISTRATION

Without a Heritage Area organization, regional heritage initiatives would be difficult to coordinate. Preservation efforts would probably continue to be fragmented and uncoordinated due to limited technical assistance and lack of funding.

##### INTERPRETATION, EDUCATION, AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Existing cultural and natural sites in the upper Housatonic Valley would continue to maintain the current visitor experience and levels of interpretation. These sites would not benefit from increased coordination, and visitors would not receive a cohesive interpretation providing a thematic regional context for the sites. Since opportunities for interpretation and education would not increase over existing levels, cultural and natural resources would not benefit from increased appreciation or heightened concern about their long-term survival.

##### IMPACTS ON NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

There would be no additional impacts to natural and cultural resources. Neither would there be positive preservation measures for cultural and natural resources.

##### IMPACTS ON PARK AND RECREATION RESOURCES

Without a heritage area organizing group, regional recreational opportunities, such as trails

or Housatonic River and riverbank restoration, would be more difficult to coordinate than under other alternatives.

#### SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS

Except for normal visitor increases generated by individual sites, visitor volume, expenditures, and lengths of stay would not increase over existing levels. Local businesses would not generate additional income or sales tax revenues.

#### TRANSPORTATION

There would be no increase in traffic in the area except for traffic generated by existing uses.

#### POLLUTION AND WASTEWATER DISPOSAL

Since there would be no increase in visitor volume, there would be no commensurate increases in pollution and wastewater disposal.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

With no new heritage programs, there would be no new positive investments in the community except those generated by existing organizations.

#### • ALTERNATIVE 2:

#### NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

#### FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT

Under this alternative, Congress would designate the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area and would designate a local management entity to prepare a heritage management plan, establish priorities, and implement the plan in cooperation with other parties. Through provision of technical assistance for planning and preservation, the National Park Service could contribute to the long-term preservation and interpretation of cultural and natural resources in the area.

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*“The best tonic is the Housatonic.”*

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.,  
*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*

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The Housatonic River, near downtown  
Pittsfield, MA

#### ADMINISTRATION

A management entity supported by federal legislation could focus regional attention on resource protection. Under this alternative, there would be an organization for coordinating federal, state, regional, and local programs to address the protection of cultural and natural resources and promote heritage tourism. The coordinating entity could serve as a forum for communities, businesses, nonprofit institutions, property owners, and users of resources to work together in identifying, protecting, and developing heritage area resources appropriately.

The management entity would become an information clearinghouse, coordinating efforts that would increase public awareness and stewardship of local resources. Other national heritage area management entities around the country have proven effective at protecting and interpreting natural and cultural resources. They have built in broad geographic and interest group representation capable of facilitating complex planning projects.

#### INTERPRETATION, EDUCATION, AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Under this alternative there would be increased opportunities for interpretation and education available to both visitors and residents throughout the area. Visitors would receive a broad overview of the region, indicating how specific cultural and natural sites fit into major regional themes. Developing residents' appreciation of the region's cultural and natural heritage would increase pride in the area. Enhanced interpretation and promotion could bring greater recognition and assistance from all levels of government and from the private sector.

The federal funding and assistance available under this alternative would enhance the visitor experience more than the other alternatives because it could pay for signage, information centers, wayside exhibits, museum exhibits, new research, and education programs. The existence of these amenities, particularly the four proposed information centers, would not attract a large number of new visitors to the region, but would enhance the experience of those vacationers who already come to the area. It is anticipated that the four information centers in the upper Housatonic Valley would be located in existing information centers or museums. These

buildings already would have traffic, so the additional visitation by tourists would probably not have deleterious impacts.

#### IMPACTS ON CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The increases in visitor volume and length of stay would generate marginally greater impacts on natural areas and cultural resources. Given the existing levels of use at heritage sites, an estimated 80,000 additional visitor days spread across the heritage area. They would occur mainly between May and October. New visitation would not likely cause additional congestion over traffic levels at existing individual sites.

This alternative could stimulate conservation of scenic and working landscapes in the area and preservation of historic structures and objects. The level of federal funding and technical assistance potentially available under this alternative could generate greater preservation efforts than other alternatives. Funds would be available for the national heritage area to make grants to local heritage nonprofit organizations for preservation and interpretation.

It should be noted that existing land use regulations and policies would remain under the auspices of existing governmental entities.

#### IMPACTS ON PARK AND RECREATION RESOURCES

Communities could benefit from a coordinated effort that includes National Park Service support to expand and link recreational facilities. The region's efforts to clean up and improve recreational opportunities along the Housatonic River could be strengthened by recognizing the river as the spine of the heritage area.

#### SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS

Under this alternative, the heritage area would receive federal designation, which reflects national recognition of the area's importance. The national heritage area designation carries with it the National Park Service "seal of approval" and receives publicity in NPS descriptive materials. National heritage areas are usually included in American Automobile Association and other national promotional materials and guidebooks. This recognition can increase the national and international marketability of the region and increase the management entity's ability to leverage funding. It is estimated that the direct annual

economic impact of Alternative 2 could be at least \$8,040,000.

Because the upper Housatonic Valley is already an established tourist destination, the expected effects would entail modest increases in visitor trips and longer vacation stays. Visitors would presumably stop at lesser-known heritage sites throughout the region. An increase in tourism expenditures would be accompanied by increased sales tax revenues, payroll and supply expenditures in the local economy, and local employment. These increases would mean added income for local businesses and could expand the market for overnight accommodations, restaurants, and other retail venues.

#### TRANSPORTATION

The increases in visitor volume and length of stay would generate corresponding increases in vehicular traffic. Alternative 2: National Heritage Area is estimated to add 50,000 visitor nights and 15,000 local day trips and another 15,000 non-local day trips. The 15,000 local day trips would be generated by local vehicles that are already operating within the study area.

Although additional visitor volume would increase vehicular volume, the associated increase would likely be imperceptible to the average motorist. Consider that the Berkshire Visitors Bureau estimates that over 2.5 million people visit the Massachusetts portion of the upper Housatonic Valley alone. Attendance at the Norman Rockwell Museum is 190,000 (FY97-98) and attendance at the Berkshire Museum is 100,000 (1998). These museums accommodate such use without negative environmental impacts.

Alternative 2, which would have a greater visitor impact than Alternative 3, could produce mitigation measures that could not only help offset potential negative environmental impacts associated with increases in vehicular use, but could enhance transportation options in the upper Housatonic Valley. Mitigation measures could include improving public transportation, bicycle, and walking opportunities, implementing multi-modal transportation linkages, and making automobile trips more efficient through better directions and signage. These measures could lead to a reduction in overall car trips.

#### POLLUTION AND WASTEWATER DISPOSAL

The increases in visitor volume and length of stay would generate corresponding impacts associated with increases in pollution and wastewater disposal. These impacts would be extremely modest, given that the projected visitor volume increase would be 80,000 visitor days per year.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

By promoting regional pride, heritage themes, and the preservation of cultural and natural resources, the national heritage area would help attract financial resources to support economic and community development projects.

#### • ALTERNATIVE 3:

##### PRIVATELY-ORGANIZED HERITAGE AREA

#### FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT

Under this alternative, there would be no formal designation of a heritage area. No additional federal mechanisms for resource recognition or protection would be pursued. Federal involvement in the region would be limited to existing competitive grant and technical assistance programs.

#### ADMINISTRATION

A privately organized and funded management entity would promote an increased appreciation of heritage resources and themes in the region. It is assumed that this organization would have significantly fewer resources than a national heritage area, especially since no local institution has yet come forth to offer support for a privately established heritage organization as the Cape Cod Commission did with Heritage Cape Cod. The private heritage organization would most likely concentrate on publishing brochures and organizing heritage trails and walking tours. It probably would not have the capacity to create a forum for communities, business, nonprofit institutions, property owners, and users of resources to work together in identifying, protecting, and developing heritage resources.

#### INTERPRETATION, EDUCATION, AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Under Alternative 3, opportunities for interpretation and education available to both visitors and residents would be moderately increased. Since resources for these efforts would be relatively small, however, opportunities for learning about

broad regional themes and connections between individual historic and natural sites would be limited mainly to brochures and occasional special events and tours. Developing residents' appreciation of the region's cultural and natural heritage could increase pride in the area. Enhanced interpretation and promotion could bring greater recognition and assistance for long-term preservation of heritage resources.

#### IMPACTS ON CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Increases in visitor volume and length of stay would generate marginally greater impacts on natural areas and cultural resources. Given the existing levels of use at heritage sites, there would be an estimated 20,000 additional visitor days spread across the heritage area. They would occur mainly between May and October. These new visitors would not likely cause additional congestion over traffic levels at existing individual sites.

This alternative could interpret heritage themes and promote visitation to heritage sites, mainly through brochures, special events, and walking tours. Nevertheless, this management alternative would most likely lack the resources to promote conservation of scenic and working landscapes and preservation of historic structures and objects. Funds would not be available to make grants to local nonprofit heritage organizations, undertake extensive education and research projects, or establish visitor centers or signage programs.

The Berkshire Hills seen from the Housatonic River



Existing land use regulations and policies would remain under the auspices of existing governmental entities under this management alternative.

#### IMPACTS ON PARK AND RECREATION RESOURCES

A privately organized heritage group would probably lack the resources to promote development of walking/biking trails or development of recreational opportunities along the Housatonic River or elsewhere in the valley.

#### SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS

If Alternative 3: Privately Organized Heritage Area were adopted, a lesser number of visitors would be anticipated than under the national heritage area scenario. A privately organized heritage area would lack the federal designation and funding that comes with a national heritage area and would be less likely to carry out preservation and interpretation projects that would attract new visitors to the area. The total annual tourism expenditure impact is estimated to be approximately \$1,760,000.

Because the upper Housatonic Valley is already an established tourist destination, the expected effects would entail modest increases in visitor trips and longer vacation stays. Accompanying an increase in tourism expenditures would be increased sales tax revenues, payroll and supply expenditures in the local economy, and local employment. These increases would mean added income for local businesses and could expand the market for overnight accommodations, restaurants, and other retail venues.

#### TRANSPORTATION

The increases in visitor volume and length of stay would generate corresponding increases in vehicular traffic. Alternative 3: Privately Organized Heritage Area is estimated to generate an additional 10,000 visitor nights and 5,000 local day trips and 5,000 non-local day trips.

Although additional visitor volume would increase vehicular volume, the traffic increase would likely be imperceptible to the average motorist and resident. Consider that the Berkshire Visitors Bureau estimates that over 2.5 million people visit the Massachusetts portion of the upper Housatonic Valley alone. Attendance at the Norman Rockwell Museum is



190,000 (FY97-98) and attendance at the Berkshire Museum is 100,000 (1998). These museums accommodate such use without negative environmental impacts.

Alternative 3 probably would not generate enough additional funding to provide improved auto signage or promote meaningful non-automobile transportation. It would be less likely than Alternative 2: National Heritage Area to make transportation improvements in the region and mitigate its traffic impacts, as negligible as they might be.

#### POLLUTION AND WASTEWATER DISPOSAL

The increases in visitor volume and length of stay would generate corresponding impacts associated with increases in pollution and wastewater disposal. These impacts would be extremely modest, given that the projected visitor volume increase would be 20,000 visitor days per year.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Promoting heritage themes can increase local pride; but this alternative will not attract new financial resources for preservation and economic and community development.

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*The Appalachian Mountain Club regards the national heritage area as providing “an opportunity to help unite various initiatives along the river with a common theme.”*

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Housatonic River, Ashley Falls, MA

#### Summary of Impact Considerations

The alternatives described, which do not entail National Park Service management, can be ranked according to their potential impacts.

ALTERNATIVE 1: Continuation of Current Practices would not induce any new visitor trips to the upper Housatonic Valley, but it would not generate any new interest in or resources for preserving cultural or natural resources in the area.

ALTERNATIVE 3: Privately Organized Heritage Area is estimated to add up to 20,000 visitor days per year. Since this alternative would primarily fund brochures, walking tours, and special events, it would not likely generate many funds for resource preservation or transportation mitigation. It would create new impacts without strengthening environmental protection, historic preservation, or transportation efforts.

ALTERNATIVE 2: National Heritage Area would increase visitor days by 80,000 each year. This alternative would be the only one to provide funding and leverage for further outside financial support for efforts connected to environmental protection, historic preservation, and transportation improvements in the upper Housatonic Valley. Though generating the most visitor impacts, this alternative would be the only one to produce significant environmental benefits.

## Summary of Alternatives and Their Impacts

Action Item	Alternative 1: Current Practices	Alternative 2: National Heritage Area	Alternative 3: Privately Organized Heritage Area
Federal Involvement	No federal involvement	Federal designation of national heritage area; federal funding & NPS technical assistance	No federal involvement
Administration	None	Federally recognized local management entity	Private nonprofit organization
Cultural & Natural Resources	None	Incremental increase in public use of resources; promote protection of resources through coordination and funding	Marginal increase in public use of resources; but not enough capacity or funding to protect resources
Interpretation Education & Visitor Experience	Existing sites continue current practices	Heritage area signage, visitor information centers, waysides, exhibits, research projects, education programs, brochures, walking tours, and special events; tells the full story of four major themes	New brochures, walking tours, and special events; unable to interpret four major themes thoroughly or undertake education and research
Park & Recreation Resources	None	Heritage area would help coordinate enhancement of park and recreation resources	Nonprofit organization would lack resources to promote improvements to park and recreation resources
Socioeconomic Impacts	No additional economic benefit to community	Estimated 80,000 additional visitor-days with estimated \$8,040,000 expenditures	Estimated 20,000 additional visitor-days with estimated \$1,760,000 expenditures
Transportation	No new traffic impacts; no new transportation improvements	Minimal traffic increase across region; could promote mitigation and enhance non-auto options	Negligible traffic increase across region; no resources to promote transportation improvements
Pollution & Wastewater Disposal	None	Negligible pollution and wastewater disposal impacts	Negligible pollution and wastewater disposal impacts
Community Development	No new impacts	By promoting regional pride, heritage themes, and preservation of cultural and natural resources, the heritage area can support economic and community development projects	Promoting heritage themes can increase local pride; but this alternative does not bring new funding resources for preservation and development

## Public Consultation

A public meeting about the feasibility study and Environmental Assessment was a workshop held at the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, MA, on November 17, 2001. The main points and concerns expressed at the meeting follow.

The workshop included brief presentations by local experts on industrial history, cultural history, and conservation of the natural environment. These topics are considered central to the upper Housatonic Valley. The workshop elicited interest in these including the following topics in the proposed heritage area: Native Americans; human rights as an over-arching theme for Indians, African Americans, and women; Shays' Rebellion (rooted in western Massachusetts agrarianism); the region's role in the American Revolution and the Massachusetts Constitution; Cyrus Field's (Stockbridge, MA, native) transatlantic cable; the ice industry; papermaking industry as environmental polluters and stewards; the pervasiveness of small-scale industry in the first half of the 19th century; W.E.B. Dubois, Great Barrington, MA, native and national civil rights leader; the evolving reputation of Norman Rockwell.

There were several points made about the management structure and the process of developing a heritage area:

- Some argued that the study area boundary should be expanded to include several new com-

munities that share a have common history and geography with the upper Housatonic Valley. Two of these towns—Hancock, MA, and Becket, MA—are partly located in the upper Housatonic watershed and have important regional resources. The Hancock Shaker Village Museum is in Hancock, and Becket is the home of the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and Jacob's Ladder Auto Trail. Colebrook, CT, though not within the watershed, has iron industry connections to the Salisbury iron district.

- Representatives of the Mohican Nation, including members of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band in Wisconsin, attended the workshop and discussed the importance of including the story of the Mohicans in the proposed national heritage area. It was pointed out that there is an extensive history dating back well before contact with the Europeans that should be explored.

- Educational and promotional events like a weekend of walking tours in the proposed heritage area would help people to better understand the region's heritage resources. Such a program would be patterned on the Walking Weekend of the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers National Heritage Area.

- Development of a heritage area should entail ongoing public outreach with the public and should use newsletters, websites, annual confer-



Hurlbut Paper Co., Willow Mill, South Lee, MA

ences, and focus groups with local teachers. The proposed heritage area should have representatives from major constituencies, including environmentalists, art museums, historical societies, performing arts organizations, municipalities, and economic development groups.

- Some participants made the point that local planning issues (not affecting local planning ordinances) should be considered when developing a heritage area. These would include: insuring that sensitive natural areas would not be overcrowded and misused with heritage area designation; providing technical assistance for open space and historic preservation; aiding economic development, especially in Pittsfield, which has experienced significant plant closings; and working closely with efforts to clean up and protect the Housatonic River.

- Some residents voiced concerns that designation of a national heritage area should not duplicate existing heritage preservation efforts. The region has an extensive array of private nonprofit and governmental cultural, historic, and environmental organizations. When this issue was considered, participants in the study process concluded that the greatest benefit of establishing a heritage area could be better coordinating existing organizations. Study participants also have pointed out that the Berkshires and the Litchfield Hills are well branded as cultural destinations. Any new heritage area designation should not interfere with successful marketing efforts, but should enhance existing strengths.

#### **Other NPS Study Contacts**

The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area Inc. (UHVNHA), a nonprofit organization advocating the establishment of the heritage area, has served as the local vehicle for generating public input for the feasibility study. Its board of directors and board of advisors provided extensive materials about the history, culture, natural environment, communities, local government, and local economy of the region. Between June 2001 and May 2002, the UHVNHA hosted National Park Service staff for numerous meetings/site visits in the region. These visits introduced NPS staff to local resources and persons active in the community. These meetings generated a great deal of information, which has been incorporated into the feasibility study and

environmental assessment. On March 4, 2002, Brenda Barrett, NPS National Heritage Area Coordinator, had meetings with working groups in Pittsfield and Canaan, at which various management issues were raised that have been incorporated into the feasibility study.

The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) assisted the NPS, through a cooperative agreement, in developing a Geographic Information System (GIS) map and inventory of local sites. These maps have been incorporated into the feasibility study. Draft copies of the GIS map were displayed for public comment at the November 17, 2001 workshop and at the January 26, 2002 advisory meeting of the UHVNHA Inc.

One newsletter was published during the planning process to seek public input on heritage themes and potential heritage area projects. Several newspaper articles were published about the heritage area planning process.

The NPS received several letters addressing specific issues related to establishment of a national heritage area in the upper Housatonic Valley. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, which endorsed the national heritage area designation at its September 20, 2002 meeting, said that the proposed heritage area could “act as a catalyst for the protection and appropriate use of our abundant historic, cultural, and natural resources” and could “enhance economic and community development activities in the region.” The Litchfield Hills Visitors Bureau (northwest Connecticut) saw the heritage area as a way to validate the importance of the area’s resources and a way to enhance the tourism experience in that area. The Berkshire Natural Resources Council wanted to be “counted among the [heritage area] designation’s ardent supporters because it acknowledges the importance of the beautiful landscape in shaping the region’s culture.”

The Appalachian Mountain Club, which is one of the few organizations with a stake in the entire upper Housatonic Valley and has been involved in many projects in both Massachusetts and Connecticut communities, regards the national heritage area as providing “an opportunity to help unite various initiatives along the river with a common theme.”

## Appendix I: Exploration of the Heritage Themes of the Upper Housatonic Valley

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During the 1940s, one of the most popular publishing projects was *The Rivers of America* series. Included in the classic series was Chard Powers Smith's *The Housatonic: Puritan River* (1946). *The Housatonic* told the story of a river valley that maintained “the beauty of the landscape, the strong intellectual tradition, and the stable agrarian economy” in the face of industrialization and urbanization. Smith recognized that the landscape of this region of western New England had produced a distinct history and culture.

The upper Housatonic Valley has also been prized for its natural beauty. Considered part of the Litchfield Hills in its Connecticut section and part of Berkshire County in Massachusetts, the upper Housatonic Valley has captivated vacationers, writers and artists, and local residents with its meandering river, scenic mountains, and resonant cultural associations.

The upper Housatonic Valley's natural beauty and rich heritage are products of an evolution that reflects human economic choices and cultural values. The watershed event in the region's development was European settlement. There is evidence of Dutch settlers moving over from the Hudson Valley to the area around Egremont, Mount Washington, and Canaan in the 1690s. Widespread English settlement started in the 1720s. Before this period the landscape was lightly used by the relatively small number of American Indians who lived in the region. The Mohicans, who were driven into the Housatonic Valley in the 17th century from their home in the Hudson Valley by their enemies the Mohawks, considered the Housatonic Valley to be “sacred.” English settlement brought a new approach to the land—partition it into individually owned parcels and aggressive economic exploitation of natural resources. The ecology of New England changed with the introduction of European plants, animals, pathogens, and humans.

English colonization began in the upper Housatonic Valley as the frontier became more secure from the French and their Indian allies. The first colonists settled in Sheffield in 1726. In order to secure the allegiance of Mohicans in their struggle against the French, the English established a mission township in Stockbridge, MA, in 1734, to Christianize the local Indians. Reverend John Sergeant's congregation included both Indians and English settlers. Chief Konkapot's conversion was influential in the development of this congregation. During the 1750s, noted Calvinist theologian Jonathan Edwards led the congregation after he was relieved of his duties in Northampton. Here he wrote his classic theological treatise *The Freedom of the Will*.

After the victory of the British over the French at Quebec in the French and Indian War in 1759, the western New England frontier became secure from Indian attacks. English settlement gained momentum in the upper Housatonic Valley and the Stockbridge Indians became marginalized. In 1761, Massachusetts established Berkshire County to administer the growing settlements. After the American Revolution, the Indians living in Stockbridge relocated to Oneida territory in upper New York State. In the early 19th century they moved once again to Ohio and later to Wisconsin, where the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians still lives. The 18th-century Indian community in Stockbridge is commemorated at the Mission House (currently maintained as a museum by the Trustees of Reservations), which Reverend Sergeant built for his family in 1739. In 1752, a reservation was established in Kent, which still exists as the Schaghticoke Reservation, though it has undergone many vicissitudes. In the 18th century, Moravians operated a Christian school for Indians there.

The towns established in the upper Housatonic Valley during the 18th century were founded around the Puritan-Congregational church. The white-clapboard meetinghouses are the lasting physical em-

bodiment of these communities. Lining town greens alongside colonial- and federal-era houses, the meetinghouses continue to convey the image of the traditional New England town.

### **The Independent Spirit of the Upper Housatonic Valley**

The upper Housatonic Valley has long been noted for its independent spirit. Richard D. Birdsall's book *Berkshire County: A Cultural History* (1959) argued that the Berkshires had a distinct culture prior to the Civil War. This regional provincialism stemmed from its remote, rugged geography. It was based in neo-Calvinist orthodoxy and populist politics and nurtured by a rich literary tradition. Williams College President Mark Hopkins explained the region's distinctiveness in his oration at the 1844 Berkshire Jubilee:

Unlike most counties, Berkshire, having a peculiar geological formation, is a place by itself, separated from the rest of the world by natural boundaries; it has also been a good deal secluded; and while we have been a New England people, our business intercourse has been with New York. Each of these circumstances has had its influence upon us, so that between us and our fellow citizens of the eastern part of the State, there is a perceptible difference.

Great Barrington native and civil rights leader W.E.B. DuBois detected the New York connection, when he commented in his *Autobiography*: "Physically and socially our community belonged to the Dutch valley of the Hudson rather than to Puritan New England, and travel went south to New York more often and more easily than east to Boston."

The region demonstrated its independent spirit during the era of the American Revolution. Local patriots drafted an early petition of grievances against British rule, called the Sheffield Declaration, at Colonel John Ashley's House (a museum maintained by the Trustees of Reservations) in 1773. Militias from Ethan Allen's original home in northwestern Connecticut joined the "Green Mountain Boys" in their capture of Fort Ticonderoga in 1775. General Henry Knox hauled the captured British cannon from Ticonderoga across the Berkshire Hills (along modern-day Route 23 or the Knox Trail) to Boston, where they were used to drive out the redcoats in 1776. The Salisbury iron industry provided 75 percent of the cannons and other armaments to the Continental Army. The fact that British mercantile laws made ironmaking illegal may have played a role in the support for the American Revolution in the upper Housatonic Valley.



The Stockbridge Indian Monument marks the tribal burial place. The Indians left Stockbridge for the West in 1783. The Stockbridge-Munsee Band is settled in Wisconsin today.

After the Revolution, a deep economic depression and extensive mortgage foreclosures spawned Shays' Rebellion in western Massachusetts. There were military encounters in Sheffield and Stockbridge, but the rebellion was suppressed. Shays' Rebellion convinced many Americans to create a strong federal government and adopt the Constitution.

The predecessor of the United State Constitution was the Massachusetts state constitution, the world's first written constitution, adopted in 1780. An essential idea of the constitution was that "All men are born free and equal." One of Colonel John Ashley's (of Sheffield Declaration fame) black slaves, Elizabeth Freeman (1744-1829), took the state constitution literally and sued for her freedom. Freeman, nicknamed "Mumbet" for her maternal qualities, succeeded



in winning her liberty. This spurred the abolition of slavery in Massachusetts in 1783 (the first state to do so) and contributed to the emancipation movement in America. After obtaining her freedom, Mumbet went to work for Theodore Sedgwick's family in Stockbridge and helped raise writer Catharine Maria Sedgwick and her brothers. The contribution of African-Americans is further evidenced by that fact that 22 African Americans from northwest Connecticut alone fought on the patriot side in the Revolutionary War.

W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963), one of America's foremost African American civil rights advocates, was born and raised in Great Barrington. It was here that DuBois developed the idea that was to inspire his life's work—that he and all blacks were equal to whites. A marker commemorates the site of his childhood home, which is a national historic landmark. DuBois wrote *The Souls of Black Folk* and helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

The upper Housatonic Valley also made a congenial setting for the settlements of Shakers, one of America's foremost 19th-century communitarian sects. The Shakers were noted for their celibacy, renunciation of private property, innovative agriculture, and well-made furniture. Shaker religious services were noted for their singing, dancing, and "shaking." The biggest problem for Shakers was that they could not expand membership through procreation and it became increasingly difficult to attract Americans to the celibate life.

Mother Ann Lee established the first Shaker community near Albany and the third Shaker community in Hancock/West Pittsfield in 1783. It lasted until 1960, when it became a museum. At Hancock Shaker Village, 20 buildings have been restored. A working farm demonstrates Shaker agricultural methods and exhibits show the labor-saving innovations invented by Shakers. These inventions included the screw propeller, the threshing machine, cut nails, the circular saw, a washing machine, a pea sheller, and the first one-horse wagon in America. There also was a Shaker village in the early 19th century at Tyringham, which is commemorated by the Tyringham Shaker National Historic District.



In 1773, local patriots signed the Sheffield Declaration, an early bill of grievances against the English crown, at Colonel John Ashley's House in Sheffield, MA.

### Industrial and Agricultural Development

Industry in the upper Housatonic Valley began with the opening of the first iron furnace in Salisbury, CT, in 1735. Some of the highest-grade iron ore deposits in the country were found in the Salisbury area, which extended from Northwestern Connecticut into Berkshire County in Massachusetts. The Salisbury iron furnace produced 75 percent of cannons used by Americans during the American Revolution. Between the Revolution and the Civil War, iron furnaces in the Salisbury area produced iron used for guns at the Springfield, MA, Armory; Eli Whitney's Hamden, CT, gunworks; and the Collinsville, CT, axe factory. After the Civil War, the Barnum Richardson Company, which owned several furnaces in the region, furnished railcars with highly durable iron wheels. In Cornwall, the iron was used to make shears; in Salisbury, to make scythes and bicycles; in Sharon, for mousetraps, hardware, buckles, and plows. The Iron Bank, established in Falls Village in 1847, still operates in the area, a reminder of a long-past heritage.

The Salisbury District's greatest growth took place between 1824 and 1837. After the Civil War, the iron industry drifted into obsolescence because of declining investment in new technologies and the rise of the steel industry, the Bessemer process, and mass production in Pennsylvania. The last iron furnaces in northwestern Connecticut and the Berkshires closed in 1923.

Yale professor Robert B. Gordon's book *A Landscape Transformed: The Ironmaking District of Salisbury*, Connecticut describes how the iron industry transformed the region's natural environment. The iron ore, of course, was extracted from mines throughout the region. Iron furnaces were located on the Housatonic River and some tributaries for waterpower, process water, and removal of waste materials. Waste slags can still be found near furnace sites.

Perhaps the biggest environmental impact was from cutting of trees for charcoal. The iron furnaces used charcoal as a fuel to produce the high levels of heat. Charcoal was obtained by a special process of partially burning hardwoods, particularly oak and chestnut. During the 1830s, local furnaces required 600,000 bushels of charcoal each year, and puddling furnaces consumed another 3,000 cords of wood. The trees in the area became so depleted that charcoal had to be imported from outside of the region. By 1866, companies in Pittsfield, Lenox, Egremont, and Great Barrington started harvesting and marketing peat as a heating fuel replacing wood. A further consequence of tree-cutting was erosion, which led to silting of the rivers, slowing water flow and reducing the hydropower capacity. By 1850, 75 percent of the region was deforested (by the late 20th century, over 75 percent of the landscape had become covered with trees again).

The region's paper industry, concentrated in Massachusetts, made comparable impacts on the environment. In 1801, Zenas Crane, of Milton, MA, started the Crane Paper Company in Dalton, MA. Crane was looking for a place that had no paper mills and that had a pure water supply necessary for the papermaking process. That place was on the Housatonic River a few miles east of Pittsfield. During the 1820s, papermaking took off in the Berkshires, as paper mills developed to serve the New York City market. They obtained the raw material—linen rag—from New York and returned the city high-quality paper. By 1840, Lee, MA, produced more paper than any town in America. During the Civil War, a Lee paper company even made paper for Confederate currency, for which it was brought to court.

As the supply of linen rags became insufficient to meet the demand for paper, Berkshire papermakers settled on wood pulp as a replacement material. Papermaking from wood pulp in America started in the Berkshires. In 1867, a grinding mill opened in Curtisville (today, the Interlaken district of Stockbridge). The mill shredded poplar that was turned into paper at a mill in neighboring Lee. The new wood pulp industry, which produced a less durable paper often used for newsprint, used trees for its raw material. Within 20 years, the local wood pulp supply was exhausted. Wood pulp mills moved closer to Maine and its abundant wood pulp supply. The business for fine, linen-rage paper remained in the Berkshires, and Crane Paper Company continues to supply the federal government with the raw stock for paper currency. Other paper mills remain in Housatonic, Lee, and South Lee, MA.

The wood pulp industry also poured toxic lime, bleaches, and dyes into the rivers. Paper mill owners were unaware of the danger from the chemicals until the pollution ruined water purity. Great Barrington native W.E.B. DuBois remarked: "I was born by a golden river... That river of my birth was golden because of the woolen and paper waste that soiled it."

Other contributors to deforestation were the tanning industry and the rise of the steam engine. The tanning industry, based in the southern Berkshires and Pittsfield, used the tannin in the bark of hemlock and oak trees to "tan" hides. Tanneries also dumped their noxious wastes into the Housatonic River. The steam engines, which replaced much waterpower after the Civil War, increased the demand for firewood and spurred deforestation. Steam engines also allowed factories to move away from rivers and locate in a wider range of places.

After the Civil War, the small industries of the upper Housatonic Valley became less competitive with the highly mechanized, capital-intensive industries operating on a larger scale and catering to a booming national market. The upper Housatonic's small-scale industries, primarily dependent upon waterpower, represented an early phase of the Industrial Revolution that prevailed across New England before being superseded.

The gristmills, sawmills, and other mills that were as ubiquitous on New England streams in the early 19th century as current-day gas stations, disappeared after the Civil War. Large-scale hydropower for



**The last skirmish of Shays' Rebellion took place in Sheffield, MA, in 1787. This monument marks the event.**

producing electricity was introduced in the early 20th century. The first hydropower dam on the Housatonic River opened at New Milford in 1904, and four other dams were added on the Connecticut portion of the river. The Falls Village Station (1914) is still operating, though there is a proposal to close it and end the practice of impoundment that produces power at predetermined periods of the day. The new “run-of-the-river” proposal would enhance ecological qualities of river and be favorable to fishermen, but it would curtail whitewater boating opportunities. Hydropower would continue, but would not be controlled to serve peak periods.

While the region’s first industries were reaching obsolescence, the region’s agriculture was also entering a steep decline. Agriculture had peaked in the early decades of the 19th century. Elkanah Watson established America’s first agricultural county fair in Pittsfield in 1810 to promote scientific farming. Farming prospered into the 1830s, but it became apparent that the fertile Midwestern breadbasket was far more productive. Southern New England farmers turned to raising merino sheep during the 1830s and 1840s. Sheep-raising encouraged clearance of rocky hillsides for pastures and caused soil erosion. When sheep-raising lost profitability, hilltop communities became untenable for farming and the forest started a slow return.

Herman Melville’s novel *Israel Potter* (1854) described the agricultural decline of the Berkshire hill towns:

As for farming as a regular vocation, there is not much of it here. At any rate, no man by that means accumulates a fortune from this thin and rocky soil, all whose arable parts have long since been nearly exhausted. As that, at the present day, some of those mountain townships present an aspect of singular abandonment. Though they have never known aught but peace and health, they, in one lesser aspect at least, look like countries depopulated by plague and war.

Over the years, most towns in the upper Housatonic Valley lost so many people that their population in 1920 was as low as it had been in 1800. The switch from horse to auto transportation ended the need for hay-growing, which was the death knell for many struggling farms. Edith Wharton’s novella *Ethan Frome* (1911) depicted the rural poverty and desperation that pervaded much of the Berkshires during these years. Wharton’s *Summer* (1917) explored the cultural differences between the isolated village society and the sophisticated urban vacationers who came to the area.

The most successful agricultural enterprise was dairy farming. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the upper Housatonic Valley was a major milk producer for New York City. The slow night trains stopping to pick up milk from the upper Housatonic farms were known as “milk trains.” In more recent years, dairying also has diminished in importance.

The great 20th-century industry of the region was the electrical equipment manufacturing in Pittsfield. William Stanley, a former Westinghouse employee, first successfully demonstrated an alternating current (AC) transformer at his laboratory in Great Barrington in 1886. Alternating current allowed electricity to be transmitted across long distances.

Four years later, Stanley established a factory to manufacture AC transformers in Pittsfield, partly because of the city’s large work force. Pittsfield had emerged as the urban center of the upper Housatonic Valley after it became the region’s railroad crossroads. The Western Railroad connected Pittsfield with Boston in 1841. The Housatonic Railroad, which originated in Bridgeport, CT, reached West Stockbridge in 1844 and connected to Pittsfield by 1849. The Berkshire county seat shifted from Lenox north to Pittsfield in 1868, confirming Pittsfield’s rise in stature. Since the early 19th century, the leading Pittsfield industry was textile mills, which dated back to the early 19th century. An early Pittsfield textile innovation was a woolen carding machine.



Charles Ives composed his piece "The Housatonic River at Stockbridge," in "Three Places in New England," after his honeymoon in Stockbridge in 1908.

William Stanley's Pittsfield manufacturing plant employed 1,700 workers in 1903. Four years later, General Electric took over the Pittsfield plant. GE developed it into a major employer and center of innovation. During World War II, over 14,000 people worked at the plant. The Pittsfield GE plant also pioneered important innovations in plastics, particularly the development of Lexan, a virtually unbreakable plastic resin used in automobiles, airplanes, and construction materials.

General Electric closed the power transformer side of its operation in the late 1980s. The plastics operation continues, and aerospace activities have been spun off to General Dynamics. As recently as 1987, 7,700 worked at the GE plant; today there are 500 employees. The psychic and economic pain of General Electric's closings still smart, and no nostalgic celebration of the electrical equipment industry has cropped up, as has happened with the older iron and paper industries. Pittsfield is struggling with a transition from a heavily industrial economy to a more diversified economic base.

### **Discovery of the Scenic and Cultural Qualities of the Upper Housatonic Valley**

By the 1830s, visitors were being charmed by scenery of the upper Housatonic Valley. The person most responsible for putting the region on the map was Stockbridge's Catharine Maria Sedgwick (1789-1867), one of America's first best-selling novelists. Her novel *A New-England Tale* (1822), which drew upon the "local color" of the Berkshires, was one of the first novels to have authentic American settings and characters. Sedgwick hailed from one of the region's most prominent families. Her brothers lived in and did business in New York. She spent winters in the city and summers in Stockbridge and, later, in Lenox.

President Martin Van Buren, Alexis de Toqueville, Harriet Martineau, Daniel Webster, Washington Irving, and other prominent personages made pilgrimages to visit Miss Sedgwick in Stockbridge. When poet and editor William Cullen Bryant was a struggling country lawyer in Great Barrington during the early 1820s, she befriended him and they maintained their connection after Bryant moved to New York. Sedgwick's famed visitors provide immeasurable publicity for the scenic Berkshires. British actress Fanny Kemble, after visiting Miss Sedgwick in 1835, wrote: "The Valley of the Housatonic, locked in by walls of every shape and size, from grassy knolls to bold basaltic cliffs—a 'Happy Valley' indeed! A beautiful little river wanders singing from side to side in the secluded Paradise."

Other writers also developed footholds in the Berkshires. New York minister and writer Henry Ward Beecher, who started summering in Lenox in 1853, publicized the upper Housatonic Valley and its attraction to writers when he compared it to the "lake-district of England." Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's in-laws, the Appleton family of Boston, had a summer place in Pittsfield that Longfellow frequented after his honeymoon visit in 1843. Boston writer and physician Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. also had a summer home in Pittsfield. Holmes wrote in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* that "The best tonic is the Housatonic."

Holmes was present at one of the great meetings in American letters in 1850, when a party that included Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and their Boston publisher James T. Fields climbed Monument Mountain in Great Barrington (where the group read aloud William Cullen Bryant's poem "Monument Mountain"). Hawthorne and Melville became friends and influenced each others' work while Hawthorne lived in Stockbridge at Tanglewood and Melville lived at Arrowhead in Pittsfield. Melville was writing *Moby Dick* (dedicated to Hawthorne) and Hawthorne was writing *The House of the Seven Gables*. Another local writer was Edward Bellamy, who published a serialized version of his novel *The Duke of Stockbridge: A Romance of Shays' Rebellion* in *The Berkshire Courier* in 1879.

The upper Housatonic Valley also attracted the interest of the Hudson River School of artists, who were painting dramatic landscapes in the scenic valley just west of the upper Housatonic. Thomas

Cole, Frederic Church (his father owned a paper mill at Lee), John Kensett, Asher B. Durand, Sanford Gifford, and George Inness painted scenes of the upper Housatonic, particularly Bash Bish Falls, Monument Mountain, and the Housatonic River itself. Their paintings promoted the region's reputation as a Northeastern Arcadia.

As at many resorts, the artists discovered the place, then discriminating wealthy vacationers followed. In the case of the upper Housatonic Valley, one of the first "summer people" was Boston businessman and man of letters Samuel Gray Ward, who in 1846 built the first summer estate, Highwood, on the Stockbridge Bowl. In 1858, New York lawyer Charles Butler built Linwood (today, part of the Norman Rockwell Museum) in Stockbridge overlooking the Housatonic River. Butler, a relative of the Sedgwick family, was influential in attracting rich New Yorkers to the upper Housatonic Valley. An early hotel of choice was Stockbridge's Red Lion Inn (established 1773; expanded 1848).

In the Gilded Age, between the Civil War and World War I, tycoons made the southern Berkshires into the "Inland Newport." This was the pastoral resort *par excellence*, not a wilderness retreat like the Adirondacks. The "season" for staying at the mansions in Lenox and Stockbridge was the early autumn, when the foliage was at its height. First-rank "society," mostly from New York City, would spend the early summer at Newport, August at Saratoga Springs for the horse races, then the Berkshires, and back to New York for the winter season. The Berkshire "cottages" were not a place to get away, but a place to socialize with one's peers and show off. Henry James observed in *The American Scene* that the Berkshires were "the land beyond any other in America... of the social idyll, of the workable, the expensively workable, American form of country life."

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Henry James, *The American Scene*

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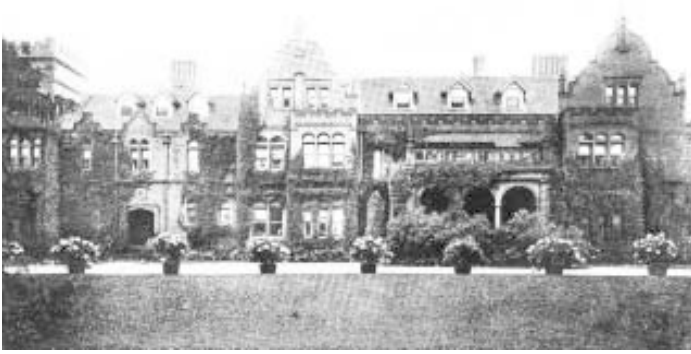
Lenox was the town of great display, with over 75 mansions in 1900. The most palatial "cottage" was Shadowbrook. It had 100 rooms, second only in size to the Vanderbilts' Biltmore, in Asheville, North Carolina. Andrew Carnegie owned Shadowbrook, where he died in 1919. Giraud Foster's white marble Bellefontaine was a replica of the Petit Trianon at Versailles. New York attorney Ambassador Joseph Choate engaged architect Stanford White to design the Shingle-style Naumkeag. George Westinghouse's Erskine Park estate straddled Lenox and Lee. Edith Wharton's home The Mount is of particular interest, since it reflects the theories of Wharton's book *The Decoration of Houses* (co-authored with architect Ogden Codman, Jr.), which served as a "bible" of good taste. The Gilded Age grandees lived in a closed society and regarded their estates as exclusive. They were not interested in promoting mass tourism in the area.

The 400-room Aspinwall Hotel in Lenox hosted such luminaries as John D. Rockefeller and Theodore and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Stockbridge also had mansions, but the social life tended to be less showy. Vacation homes in Lee and Tyringham tended to be more modest.

In Connecticut, Norfolk, Sharon, and Salisbury had substantial summer communities. Architect Alfredo S.G. Taylor designed many rural estates in Norfolk, more than a dozen of which are on the National Register of Historic Places. Wealthy New Yorkers built Colonial Revival mansions on Sharon's South Green. Salisbury attorney Donald Warner and partners bought up abandoned woodlands on Mount Riga to create an Adirondack-style enclave of rustic "camps."

Many of the "cottages" were built above the Housatonic River with scenic views across the river valley. The wealthy summer people who frequented the Berkshires were able to assemble massive private estates at a reasonable cost because many of the former landholders, who were struggling farmers, were ready to sell off their properties at a low price. The best-known example was New York millionaire and Secretary of the Navy William Whitney's purchase of four dozen farms with over 11,000 acres for a game preserve located in Lenox, Lee, Washington, and Becket.

It is intriguing that the paper and iron industries had not caused such widespread blight that the region was unattractive to vacationers. Certain villages might have mills and hillsides might be clear-cut



Ventfort Hall, once the "cottage" of J.P. Morgan's sister Sarah, has become the Museum of the Gilded Age in Lenox, MA.

for charcoal and wood pulp, but much of the scenic quality remained. The abandoned iron furnaces gradually became quaint ruins. In any event, the development of the upper Housatonic Valley as a resort area saved it from the seedy decline that afflicted other rural areas. The ostentatious mansions changed local society, especially in Lenox and Stockbridge, so that the locals got out of farming and made their living building and maintaining the seasonal estates.

The imposition of the federal income tax in 1913 ended construction of the country mansions. The estates started to break up during the 1920s. Carnegie's widow sold Shadowbrook to the Jesuits for a seminary in 1922. The Depression made it harder to maintain the estates, and labor was scarce during World War II. After the war, some of the estates were torn down or burned down. Others became schools or seminaries.

In recent years, they have been recycled as resorts and museums catering to middle-class travelers. The Canyon Ranch health spa is located at the French Renaissance Bellefontaine. Blantyre (Elizabethan), Eastover (Georgian), Cranwell (Queen Anne), Wyndhurst (Tudor), Wheatleigh (Italian Renaissance), Orleton (Georgian), Pine Acre (Queen Anne) are all resorts or inns. The Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health is at the site of Shadowbrook (mansion burned in 1950s). Linwood, Naumkeag, and Ventfort Hall are museums. Edith Wharton's The Mount is a museum and former home of Shakespeare & Company.

The coming of the automobile in the 1910s and 1920s democratized vacations, making it easy for the middle class to enjoy the areas that had formerly been exclusive preserves. Automobile tourism opened up many areas of the upper Housatonic Valley to visitors and encouraged a flowering of cultural, recreational, and environmental attractions as well as a stronger sense of regional identity.

### Shaping a Scenic Landscape

Visitors to the upper Housatonic Valley are drawn by the beautiful scenery. They appreciate the scenery because of its "natural" qualities, yet they seldom recognize the degree of conservation and beautification that the landscape has undergone. The traveler driving through the upper Housatonic River Valley may notice that most of the hillsides are covered with trees and there are virtually no structures along the summits. Most of them are protected by some government or nonprofit entity. Many of these hills demarcate the edges of the upper Housatonic watershed and are preserved to protect water supplies and prevent erosion.

The area's conservation impulse began with the Laurel Hill Association of Stockbridge, the first village improvement society in America. Theodore Sedgwick, Jr., donated Laurel Hill to the town of Stockbridge as park in 1834. In 1853, Mary Hopkins Goodrich, of a prominent local family, led the founding of the Laurel Hill Association. The association's goals were: "We mean to work till every street shall be graded, every side-walk shaded, every noxious weed eradicated, every watercourse laid and perfected, and every nook and corner beautified—in short, till Art combined with Nature shall have rendered our town the most beautiful and attractive spot in our ancient commonwealth." The Laurel Hill Association planted hundreds of shade trees, erected a fence around the cemetery, lit the streets with kerosene lamps, preserved conservation land, and helped pay for an attractive stone railroad station. These beautification efforts grew out of the Romantic aesthetic that valued picturesque landscapes.

The Laurel Hill Association, which is still active, became the model for similar initiatives elsewhere in the upper Housatonic and for the hundreds of village improvement societies that appeared across the country during the late 19th century. A major advocate of village improvement societies was Dr. Birdsey Northrup, of Kent, CT. Northrup was a proponent of tree-planting and Arbor Day, which he introduced across this country and in Japan and Europe.



The wealthy Gilded Age “cottagers” played a vital role in conserving the region’s natural environment. William Whitney’s 11,000-acre estate featured a game preserve with buffalo, moose, deer, elk, angora sheep, and over 2,000 pheasants. Frederic Law Olmsted’s firm designed the landscaping and the routes for macadamized roads. Cowboys led hunting parties. After Whitney’s wife died, he sold the animals to zoos and abandoned the estate. In 1915, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts purchased the Whitney property and made it October Mountain State Forest. The Schermerhorn family, of Lenox and New York, then donated the 1,000-acre scenic Schermerhorn Gorge to the October Mountain Forest.

Monument Mountain, in Great Barrington, had originally been divided into small farms and woodlots. After most were abandoned, David Dudley Field, Jr., built a scenic drive on the mountain in 1877 and made it available for public use. In 1899, Helen Butler, daughter of New York attorney Charles Butler, of Linwood in Stockbridge, acquired old farmlands on the southeastern portion of the mountain and donated them to the Trustees of Reservations, which still maintains it as a public conservation area. The Trustees of Reservations is the Massachusetts organization that was established as the world’s first land trust in 1891. The East Mountain State Forest in Great Barrington had similar origins. Edward F. Searles, owner of Searles Castle, donated the property as parkland.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts assembled Beartown State Forest, in Great Barrington, Monterey, Lee, and Tyringham, from various purchases of hillsides deforested for charcoal-making, including woodland cleared by the Richmond iron industry. Beartown had been a hilltop farming community that was abandoned in the latter 19th century. The Commonwealth also received a gift of 1,000 acres in Monterey from Susan Ridley Sedgwick in memory of her husband Arthur Warton Swann to form the adjoining Swann State Forest. It is considered to have been the first scientifically managed state forest in Massachusetts.

New York surgeon Dr. Frederick S. Dennis owned a 1,627-foot summit in Norfolk that eventually became a state park. In 1908, he built an octagonal bungalow with an observation deck that hosted such guests as President Taft and industrialist Andrew Carnegie. Today, visitors can still enjoy the view from Dr. Dennis’s bungalow. The White Memorial Foundation, established in 1913 in Litchfield, CT, by philanthropists Alain White and his sister May, contributed thousands of acres for Connecticut state parks at Kent Falls, Macedonia Brook, Mohawk Mountain, and Campbell Falls.



Still of Arlo Guthrie in *Alice’s Restaurant*, 1969.

Most state parks and forests in Massachusetts and Connecticut originated as either land donations from wealthy families or inexpensive purchases of deforested land. States were seeking to improve management of depleted forest resources. Many state forests acquired their current appearance during the 1930s, when the federal Civilian Conservation Corps built roads, bridges, trails, and campgrounds in them.

The transition from iron-industry and charcoal-making uses to valued nature preserves is especially evident on the 50-square-mile Mount Riga plateau. Mount Riga rises 1,000 feet at the tri-corner area of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York. In the early 19th century, Mount Riga was a major iron industry site, but it now is protected by state parks and private conservation easements to form what The Nature Conservancy has recognized as one of the “last great places on earth.” The Nature Conservancy has put its money where its mouth is and has conserved hundreds of acres in what it calls the Berkshire Taconic Landscape.

Today conservation efforts continue in order to prevent development from encroaching on existing open space. The Berkshire Natural Resources Council has been a pioneer in private conservation efforts. The State of Connecticut is buying easements to protect over 6,700 acres in the state’s largest privately owned forest, Great Mountain Forest in Norfolk and Canaan. Great Mountain is the key link of a contiguous forest preservation area that includes Housatonic State Forest, Robbins Swamp, Hollenbeck Fish & Game Club, Canaan Mountain Natural Area, and protected watershed land

owned by BHC Company and Torrington Water Company. The Great Mountain Forest was assembled a century ago for about \$1.25 per acre from forests that had been cut down to produce charcoal for the iron and tanning industries. This forest today serves as an outdoor laboratory for Yale University's forestry program.

Along the ridges and through the valley runs the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, which was laid out through the upper Housatonic Valley between 1928 and 1935. Conceived by Benton MacKaye in 1921, the Appalachian Trail was the first trans-regional walking trail in the country. One of the early upper Housatonic Valley leaders in building the Appalachian Trail was Walter Pritchard Eaton, a Sheffield resident, Yale professor, prolific writer on nature subjects, and major back-to-the-country proponent.

For decades, hundreds of volunteers have mobilized to maintain the Appalachian Trail in the upper Housatonic Valley as part of a model public-private conservation effort. Because of their proximity to settled communities, the Trail segments at Bull's Bridge and Falls Village rank among the most heavily-used along the entire Appalachian Trail.

Land conservation also has led to increased recreational opportunities. This region pioneered downhill skiing in the Northeast. The Bosquet ski area, situated on Yokun's Seat in Pittsfield, set up the first ski tow south of Vermont in 1934 and attracted thousands of skiers, many from New York. About the same time, the G-Bar-S Ranch in Great Barrington (today's Butternut Basin) also opened a ski resort. The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Appalachian Mountain Club cut ski trails at many sites, including Pittsfield State Forest and East Mountain State Forest. Mohawk Mountain, in Cornwall, became the first ski area in Connecticut in 1946. It revolutionized skiing by introducing artificial snow two years later. The ski jump at Salisbury is one of the oldest in the country.

The love of nature in the upper Housatonic Valley has inspired some local residents to protect elm trees that have survived Dutch elm disease. A Great Barrington based organization, Elm Watch, protects the surviving elms and promotes planting of disease-resistant elm species. Elm Watch has created the Majestic Elm Trail, which includes over 50 large elm trees between Sharon and Dalton.

The upper Housatonic Valley also has been a pacesetter in protecting its river. The Housatonic Valley Association, dating from 1941, is one of the oldest watershed protection organizations in the country. It originated from concerns about eradicating soapy wastes from Lee paper mills and sewage from Pittsfield. The Housatonic River Initiative, Housatonic Valley Association, Housatonic River Restoration, Berkshire Natural Resources Council, and other organizations and town officials have encouraged recreational use of the river, cleanup of the riverbanks, and cleanup of the PCBs that were discharged into the river by the General Electric plant in Pittsfield. General Electric is cleaning up the "brownfields" site in Pittsfield for economic redevelopment and is providing a \$25 million natural resource damage settlement to clean up the Housatonic River and its banks.

The sustainability movement has important roots in the upper Housatonic. In the early 1980s, the first Community Supported Agriculture project started in Egremont and the Community Land Trust originated in Great Barrington. This work has been inspired by the writings of E.F. Schumacher (*Small Is Beautiful*) and the E.F. Schumacher Society, which has offices in Egremont.

Hancock Shaker Village, in Hancock, MA, and the New England Heritage Breeds Conservancy, which is based in nearby Richmond, are preserving and regenerating heritage breeds of livestock, many of which have been dying off. Working with some local farms, they are promoting a revival of rare breeds, which produce livestock with greater longevity and tastier meat and are more environmentally sustainable. Hancock Shaker Village plans to sell meat and cheese from heritage breeds under its own Hancock Shaker Farms label.

### **The Appeal of the Arts**

The upper Housatonic Valley is well known for its music and other cultural activities, particularly during the summer months. Composer Charles Ives received inspiration for his piece “The Housatonic at Stockbridge” (part of “Three Places in New England”) while walking along the river with his new wife during their honeymoon in 1908.

The region’s musical heritage originated with wealthy music lovers. In 1899, Ellen Battell Stoeckel and Carl Stoeckel, Yale’s first Professor of Music, started the Litchfield Choral Union on their summer estate, The Whitehouse, in Norfolk. Seven years later they built the handsome cedar-and-redwood-paneled Music Shed, which a century later hosts the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival and the Yale Summer School of Music and Arts. Composers spending time at Norfolk’s music festival have included Sibelius, Rachmaninoff, Vaughan Williams, and Bruch.

In 1918, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge started the South Mountain Concerts at the 440-seat Temple of Music on her Pittsfield estate. Mrs. Coolidge commissioned chamber works by Schoenberg, Webern, Martinu, Respighi, and Roy Harris. On a hilltop in Falls Village, Chicago Symphony Orchestra concertmaster Jacques Gordon established Music Mountain as a chamber music colony in 1930. Supportive patrons enabled Gordon to build an acoustically superb chamber music concert hall that has hosted some of the world’s finest soloists, string quartets, and jazz musicians.

The most famous music institution in the upper Housatonic Valley is Tanglewood, summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Wealthy summer residents seeking refined entertainment latched on to composer Henry Kimball Hadley’s dream of holding outdoor symphony concerts “under the stars.” New York socialite Gertrude Robinson Smith organized three concerts by New York Philharmonic players at an Interlaken farm in 1934. But the New York Philharmonic would not commit to annual summer performances. Two years later, the Berkshire Symphonic Festival featured the Boston Symphony Orchestra performing under a tent. When BSO conductor Serge Koussevitsky demanded a permanent music shed as a prerequisite for returning the following year, Mary Aspinwall Tappan donated her 200-acre Tanglewood estate for a music center. The designers of the Music Shed were Eliel Saarinen, Eero Saarinen, and Joseph Franz. In more recent years, the Seiji Ozawa Hall, by architect William Rawn, has received many plaudits for its design. Tanglewood has grown to deserve the title of “The American Salzburg,” bestowed upon it by Massachusetts Governor James Michael Curley, as many of the world’s leading musicians, singers, and conductors have appeared there.

The combination of rural simplicity and cultural cachet drew dance pioneer Ted Shawn to establish the Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival in Becket, in 1933. Jacob’s Pillow started as a venue for demonstrating the role for men in professional dance and evolved into the preeminent United States summer dance festival. It is devoted to performing and teaching modes of dance from around the world. The Ted Shawn Theatre, built in 1942 by Joseph Franz, is a pine barn-like structure that sets a rustic tone for the dance campus.

The upper Housatonic Valley’s cultural offerings have grown with leaps and bounds in recent years. Significant institutions include Shakespeare & Company (Lenox), the Berkshire Theater Festival (Stockbridge), the Aston Magna Festival (Great Barrington), the Berkshire Choral Festival (Sheffield), and Tri-Arts at the Sharon Playhouse.

The upper Housatonic’s scenic beauty and lively cultural life attracted artists who still affect the region today. Sculptor Daniel Chester French, famed for his Lincoln Memorial statue and the “Minuteman” at Concord, built a summer home at Chesterwood, in Stockbridge, which is a museum today. French left a modest artistic legacy in Stockbridge, designing the rostrum, tablet, and seat of natural stone at the base of Laurel Hill that is used for the Laurel Hill Association’s annual meetings. Henry Hudson Kitson, sculptor of the “Minuteman” at Lexington, built a studio called Santarella in thatched gingerbread-house style in the early 1930s and worked there on and off until his death in

1947. Abstract artists George L.K. Morris and Suzy Frelinghuysen have their work displayed at their Bauhaus-style house and studio in Lenox. Artist Alexander Caldwell built stables (stationary mobiles) at his vacation home in Richmond.

Norman Rockwell lived in Stockbridge between 1953 and 1978. Many of his best-known images of Americana depicted local characters and scenes. When Stockbridge wanted to preserve the Old Corner House in 1969, Norman Rockwell offered to display some of his paintings to attract the public to the building. This led to a full Rockwell museum being established and the opening of a new museum dedicated to Rockwell's work in 1993. The museum, designed by architect Robert A.M. Stern, has spurred a renaissance in critical and public acclaim for Norman Rockwell.

Another iconic local artist is folksinger Arlo Guthrie. His famous song "Alice's Restaurant," set around Great Barrington and Stockbridge, was an influential late-1960s countercultural statement. Guthrie still lives in the area and has established The Guthrie Center, a community center and folk music venue, in a deconsecrated Episcopal church in Great Barrington.

Today the upper Housatonic Valley is one of the preeminent summer cultural resorts in the world. The sophisticated, yet rustic resort area has become a haven for metropolitan expatriates, especially from New York. The upper Housatonic is appealing for retirement and telecommuting, as well as vacationing. Urbanites send their children to prestigious boarding schools, including Hotchkiss, Salisbury, Kent, Miss Hall's, Berkshire Country Day School's Rock College of Bard College. The lack of easy highway accessibility has preserved much of the region's charm. Contemporary artists, actors, and writers who have homes in the upper Housatonic Valley include Jasper Johns, Philip Roth, Meryl Streep, Jill Clayburgh, Sam Waterston, Kevin Kline, James Taylor and Edward Hermann.

The quality of the natural and cultural environment is the key to the region's post-industrial economy. To those arriving from the bustling metropolitan areas of the Northeast, the upper Housatonic Valley is a quiet, beautiful area that has carefully maintained its historic sense of place. The citizens of the upper Housatonic Valley appreciate their heritage and natural environment a great deal. They have expressed an interest in exploring the stories of their region further and sharing them with a broader public. In establishing a national heritage area, they would increase their capacity to preserve and interpret the landscape and landmarks that embody their region's heritage.



Tanglewood by night

## Appendix II: Upper Housatonic Valley Sites National Register of Historic Places

Resource Name	City	State	Resource Name	City	State
Allen Hotel	Pittsfield	MA	Federal Work Relief Programs Structures	Cornwall	CT
Allen, William Russell, House	Pittsfield	MA	Flanders Historic District	Kent	CT
Ashley, Col. John, House	Sheffield	MA	Forbes, Samuel, Homestead	North Canaan	CT
Beardsley , Capt. Philo, House	Kent	CT	Gay, Ebenezer, House	Sharon	CT
Becket Center Historic District	Becket	MA	Glendale Power House	Stockbridge	MA
Beckley Furnace	North Canaan	CT	Golden Hill Bridge	Lee	MA
Berkshire Life Insurance Co.	Pittsfield	MA	Goodwood	Richmond	MA
Bidwell, Rev. Adonijah, House	Monterey	MA	Gould House	Norfolk	CT
Braman Camp	Norfolk	CT	Hancock Shaker Village	Hancock	MA
Brewer, Capt. John, House	Monterey	MA	Hancock Town Hall	Hancock	MA
Bull's Bridge	Kent	CT	Haystack Mountain Tower	Norfolk	CT
Canaan Village Historic District	North Canaan	CT	Hillside House	Norfolk	CT
Chesterwood	Stockbridge	MA	Holabird House	Canaan	CT
Church on the Hill	Lenox	MA	Hyde House	Lee	MA
Citizens Hall	Interlaken	MA	Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival	Becket	MA
Clark-Eames House	Washington	MA	Kenmore	Richmond	MA
Coffing, John C., House	Salisbury	CT	Kent Iron Furnace	Kent	CT
Colebrook Center	Colebrook	CT	Lakeville Historic District	Salisbury	CT
Historic District			Lawrence, Isaac, House	North Canaan	CT
Colebrook Store	Colebrook	CT	Lenox Academy	Lenox	MA
Congregational Church of West Stockbridge	West Stockbridge	MA	Lenox Library	Lenox	MA
Cornwall Bridge Railroad Station	Cornwall	CT	Lenox Railroad Station	Lenox	MA
Crane and Company	Dalton	MA	Lime Rock Historic District	Salisbury	CT
Cream Hill Agricultural School	Cornwall	CT	Low House	Norfolk	CT
Cream Hill Shelter	Sharon	CT	Lower Historic District	Washington	MA
Dalton Grange Hall No. 23	Dalton	MA	Main Street Cemetery	Dalton	MA
DuBois, W.E.B., Home Site	Great Barrington	MA	Mead Camp	Norfolk	CT
Dwight-Henderson House	Great Barrington	MA	Melville, Herman, House	Pittsfield	MA
Eames, Philip, House	Washington	MA	Merrell Tavern	South Lee	MA
East Main Street Cemetery	Dalton	MA	Methodist Episcopal Society of Tyringham	Tyringham	MA
Eaton, Crane & Pike Company Factory	Pittsfield	MA	Middlefield-Becket Stone Arch Rail Rd. Bridge Dist	Becket	MA
Elm Court	Lenox	MA	Mill River Historic District	Mill River	MA
Elm Court	Stockbridge	MA	Mission House	Stockbridge	MA
Fairview Cemetery	Dalton	MA	Monument Mills	Great Barrington	MA
Falls Village District	Canaan	CT	Morewood School	Pittsfield	MA
Farnum House	Norfolk	CT	Moseley House	Norfolk	CT

Resource Name	City	State	Resource Name	City	State
Moss Hill	Norfolk	CT	Scoville Memorial Library	Salisbury	CT
Mount Riga Ironworks Site	Salisbury	CT	Searles Castle	Great Barrington	MA
Mount, The	Lenox	MA	Sedgwick, Major	Cornwall	CT
Mulville House	Norfolk	CT	General John, House		
Music Mountain	Canaan	CT	Shadow Brook Farm	Stockbridge	MA
Naumkeag	Stockbridge	MA	Historic District		
New Marlborough Village	New Marlborough	MA	Shaker Farm	Richmond	MA
Nichols-Sterner House	Richmond	MA	Sharon Historic District	Sharon	CT
Noble House	Norfolk	CT	Sharon Valley Historic District	Sharon	CT
Norfolk Country Club House	Norfolk	CT	Sheffield Center Historic District	Sheffield	MA
Norfolk Downs Shelter	Norfolk	CT	Sheffield Plain Historic District	Sheffield	MA
Norfolk Historic District	Norfolk	CT	Shepard, John, House	Norfolk	CT
North Becket Village	Becket	MA	Shepard, Thomas, House	New Marlborough	MA
Historic District			Sibley-Corcoran House	Washington	MA
North Egremont	Egremont	MA	Smith, Governor, Homestead	Sharon	CT
Historic District			Society , Congregational	Great Barrington	MA
Old Central Fire Station	Pittsfield	MA	Church, Great Barrington		
Old Central High School	Pittsfield	MA	South Canaan	Canaan	CT
Old Covered Bridge	Sheffield	MA	Congregational Church		
Old Curtisville Historic District	Stockbridge	MA	South Center School House	Washington	MA
Old Town Hall	Pittsfield	MA	South Egremont Village	South Egremont	MA
Osborn, Benjamin, House	Mt. Washington	MA	Historic District		
Park Square Historic District	Pittsfield	MA	South Lee Historic District	Lee	MA
Phelps Farms Historic District	Colebrook	CT	South Mountain Concert Hall	Pittsfield	MA
Phelps, Arah, Inn	Colebrook	CT	Sports Building	Norfolk	CT
Power, Charles Whittlesey,	Pittsfield	MA	St. Luke's Episcopal Church	Lanesborough	MA
House			Starling Childs Camp	Norfolk	CT
Providence Court	Pittsfield	MA	Stockbridge Casino	Stockbridge	MA
Rectory and Church of	Norfolk	CT	Stoeckel, Robbins, House	Norfolk	CT
the Immaculate Conception			Taconic and West	Great Barrington	MA
Red Mountain Shelter	Cornwall	CT	Avenues Historic District		
Richmond Furnace Historical	Richmond	MA	Tamarack Lodge Bungalow	Norfolk	CT
and Archeological Dist			Trinity Episcopal Church	Lenox	MA
Rising Paper Mill	Great Barrington	MA	Tyringham Shaker Settlement	Tyringham	MA
Rock Ridge	Monterey	MA	Historic District		
Rockwell House	Norfolk	CT	Union Depot	North Canaan	CT
Rumsey Hall	Cornwall	CT	Upper Historic District	Washington	MA
Saint Andrew's Chapel	Washington	MA	U.S. Post Office (Main)	Great Barrington	MA
Saint Luke's Episcopal Church	Lanesboro	MA	Ventfort Hall	Lenox	MA



## Appendix III: Upper Housatonic Valley Sites National Historic and Natural Landmarks

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### National Historic Landmarks

The Mount, Lenox, MA—Novelist Edith Wharton's summer house

W.E.B. Dubois Boyhood Homesite, Great Barrington, MA

Mission House, Stockbridge, MA—Home of Reverend John Sergeant and theologian Jonathan Edwards and site of mission to convert local American Indians to Christianity

Crane and Company Old Stone Mill Rag Room, Dalton, MA—The oldest active paper company in the country is Crane and Company, which still makes the paper for U.S. currency.

Arrowhead, Pittsfield, MA—Home of novelist Herman Melville between 1850 and 1863. Melville wrote *Moby Dick* here.

The Connecticut portion of the upper Housatonic Valley has no National Historic Landmarks.

### National Natural Landmarks

Bartholomew's Cobble, Sheffield, MA & Salisbury, CT—Greatest natural concentration of ferns in the United States, with 43 fern species and a remarkable assemblage of carefully documented plants and animals.

Beckley Bog, Norfolk, CT—Most southerly sphagnum-heath-black spruce bog in New England.

Bingham Pond Bog, Salisbury, CT—Extremely rare, undisturbed cold northern spruce bog which is atypical due to lack of sphagnum moss.

Cathedral Pines, Cornwall, CT—Old-growth white pine and hemlock forest that is the most massive stand in the New England-Adirondacks region.

## Appendix IV:

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# Appendix V: Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, Inc. Membership List (March, 2002)

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## State and Regional Organizations

Appalachian Mountain Club Peg Brady  
Appalachian Trail Conference Land Trust (CT) Ann H. Sherwood  
Berkshire County Historical Society Susan Eisley  
Berkshire Litchfield Environmental Council Emery Sinclair  
Berkshire Natural Resources Council Tad Ames  
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission Nathaniel W. Karns  
Connecticut Historical Commission John Shanahan, State Historic Preservation Officer  
Elm Watch Tom Zetterstrom  
Housatonic Valley Association Lynn Werner; Elaine LaBella, Dennis Regan  
Housatonic River Commission Lynn Fowler  
Housatonic River Initiative Tim Gray  
Housatonic River Restoration Rachel Fletcher  
Housatonic Environmental Action League Audrey Cole, President; Judith Herkimer, Director  
Litchfield Hills Travel Council Janet Serra  
Massachusetts Audubon Society Rene Lambach; John J. Clarke  
Mohican Nation Steve Comer  
The Nature Conservancy, Berkshire-Taconic Landscape Program Tim Abbott, Director  
Tri-Corners History Council Whitney North Seymour, Jr.  
Trustees of Reservations Mark Baer; Steve McMahon

## Libraries

Berkshire Atheneum (Pittsfield) Ron Latham; Emilie Piper  
Dalton Library Doris Lamica  
Douglas Library (No. Canaan) Gretchen Kettenhofen  
Hotchkiss Library (Sharon) Mary Ligner  
David Hunt Library (Falls Village, Canaan) Emery Sinclair  
Norfolk Library Louise Schimmel  
Scoville Library (Salisbury) Sara Wardell

## Schools and Churches

Christ Church of Canaan Christopher Webber  
First Congregational Church of Sheffield Connie Carolan, Chair, Board of Trustees  
Lee H. Kellogg School John Pozzi  
Mount Everett Regional High School William Gillooly  
Native American Institute (Columbia-Greene Community College) Marian Mantzouris  
Regional School District One (CT) Theresa Terry  
Salisbury School Richard Flood, Jr.  
Simons Rock College of Bard College Bernard Rogers  
South Kent School Andrew Vadnais  
Southern Berkshire Regional School District William Cooper  
Women's Interfaith Institute of the Berkshires Rev. Allison Stokes

## Business-Civic Organizations

Cincinnatus Masonic Lodge Arthur Hyatt; Richard E. Watson  
Dalton Rotary Club R.M. Beanchesne  
Elmore Design Collaborative Tom Elmore  
Great Barrington Rotary Club Janet Doheney

Interlaken Inn (CT) Kevin Bousquet  
Lee Tri-Town Rotary Club Ralph Gleason; Kenneth Fowler  
Lime Rock Park Garrett D. Mudd  
Litchfield Bancorp (Salisbury) Gerry Hagerty  
Litchfield Hills Rotary Club Donald W. Treimann  
Monument Masonic Lodge Richard E. Watson  
National Iron Bank Steve Cornell; Richard Wardell  
New Marlborough 5 Village News David & Barbara Lowman  
North Adams Rotary Club Nancy Horan  
Pittsfield Rotary Club J. Randy Johnson  
Salisbury Rotary Club Val Bernadoni  
Sharon Women's Club Mary Kirby  
Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce Sharon Palma  
Stew Jones Restoration Stewart Jones  
Stockbridge Bowl Association Gary Kleinerman; Alan S. Burk  
Undermountain Inn Peter & Marged Higginson  
White Hart Inn Scott & Roxanne Bok

#### **Museums, Historical and Cultural Organizations**

Friends of Beckley Furnace Ed Kirby  
Berkshire Museum Thom Smith, Ann Mintz  
Berkshire Opera Company Rex & Kathy Hearn  
Berkshire Scenic Railway John Trowill  
The Bidwell House Anita Carroll-Weldon  
Colebrook Historical Society Jesse Lewis  
Cornwall Association Carol Nelson; Paul Baren  
Cornwall Historical Society Alec C. Frost; Ann Schillinger  
Connecticut Antique Machinery Association John Pawloski  
Dalton Historical Commission Mary Ellen Shea; Gail Pinna  
Egremont Historical Commission Betty Duryea; James Cooper  
Falls Village-Canaan Historical Society Gabriel Seymour  
Great Barrington Historical Society Bernard Drew, Pat Ryan, Mary Bartlett  
Greenwood Theatre Maura Cavanagh  
Hancock Shaker Village Todd Burdick; Elizabeth Billington  
Holley House Museum Tom Shachtman  
Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival Charlotte Wooldridge  
Lake Ashmore Association Dale Prindle  
Lenox Historical Society Charles Flint  
The Mount Stephanie Copeland; Roberta Lord  
New Marlborough Historical Society John D. Sisson  
Norfolk Historical Society Ann Havermeier  
Norman Rockwell Museum Laurie Norton Moffatt  
Richmond Historical Commission Bill Edwards  
Salisbury Association Tom Shachtman  
Salisbury Town Historian Norman Sills  
Sharon Historical Society Liz Shapiro; Clarence Roberts; Barb Bartram  
Sheffield Historical Commission Carl Proper  
Sheffield Historical Society Joanne Hurlbut

#### **Local Land Use, Environmental & Recreational Organizations**

Lee Conservation Commission Deborah Garry  
New Marlborough Land Preservation Trust Richard R. Stebbins  
Pittsfield Conservation Commission Michael Makes  
Sharon Land Trust Lawrence Power  
Sheffield Land Trust Kathy Orlando



### **State Legislators**

Sen. Andrea Nuciforo, Pittsfield, MA  
Rep. Christopher Hodgkins, Lee, MA  
Rep. Roberta Willis, Salisbury, CT  
Sen. Andrew Roraback, Goshen, CT

### **Municipal Government**

#### **MASSACHUSETTS**

Pittsfield Sarah Hathaway, Mayor  
Pittsfield Commission on Tourism Matthew Kerwood, Chairman  
Alford Clyde Brown  
Dalton Denis Guyer, Lawrence Gingras  
Egremont Charles Ogden  
Great Barrington Burke LeClair  
Hinsdale Bruce Marshall  
Lanesboro Paul Boudreau  
Lee Aldo Pascucci  
Lenox Timothy Doherty  
Mount Washington Margaret Whitbeck  
New Marlborough Barbara Marchione, Margaret Smith  
Richmond Selectman Chair  
Sheffield Janet Stanton  
Stockbridge Mr. Muller  
Washington William Cawley  
West Stockbridge Mark Webber

#### **Individuals**

Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Archambault, Pittsfield  
Mary N. Bartlett, Dalton  
Barbara Bartram, Sharon  
Elizabeth T. Billington, Pittsfield  
D. Whalen & B. Blakeslee, Ambler PA  
Mary E. Brazie, New Marlborough  
Virginia Brecher, West Cornwall  
Louis Bucceri, Falls Village  
Stephen & Jean Budrow, Williamstown  
Robert J. Bugley, West Stockbridge  
Mary Jane Caliento, Dalton  
Connie Carolan, Sheffield  
Katherine Chilcoat, Salisbury  
Annette Cloney, Sharon  
Christopher Clow, Sharon  
Ruth Dinerman, Lee  
Bernard Drew, Great Barrington  
John Frantzis, Middlebury, CT  
MR. & Mrs. Felipe Garcia, Sheffield  
Andy Gordon, Lenox  
Mr. & Mrs. M.J. Hayner, Canaan  
Rex & Kathleen Hearn, North Palm Beach, FL  
David & Betsy Helming, Sharon  
Caroline Herrick, Sharon  
Myron & Kay Jaffe, Mill River, MA  
Stewart K. Jones, Winsted, CT  
Frank A. Junga, Cobalt, CT  
John & Jean Leich, Cornwall Bridge

#### **CONNECTICUT**

Canaan Lou Timolet  
Cornwall Gordon Ridgway  
Kent Delores Schiesel  
Norfolk Susan Dyer  
North Canaan Douglas Humes  
Sharon P. Robert Moeller

Ruth B. Lidstone, Southfield, MA  
Susan E. Lott, Kansas City, MO  
David & Barbara Lowman, Southfield MA  
Kathleen Mahoney, East Canaan  
Stuart Marks, Salisbury  
Paul & Kelly Marshall, Dalton  
M/M David P. McAllester, Monterey  
Mrs. John S. McLennan, Tyringham  
Ian & Dorothy McCunn, Canaan  
Istar H. Mudge, Wassaic, NY  
Amy Musante, Dalton  
Frank Newton, Lenox  
William R. Parsons, Jr., Gt. Barrington  
Hector Prudhomme, Cornwall  
Josephine M. Radocchio, Goshen  
George Raymond, Great Barrington  
William B. Roberts, Pittsfield  
Joseph & Lila Ruggio, Stockbridge  
Marc & Sara Simont, West Cornwall  
Carter & Betsy Smith, Sharon  
Raymond K. Smith, West Stockbridge  
Bette Ann Stalker, New Marlborough  
Stedman H. Stephens, Fairport, NY  
Edward & Linda Van Dyke, Pittsfield  
Dominick Villane, Lanesborough  
Mr. & Mrs. William B. Warren, Sharon  
Rev. & Mrs. C.L. Webber, Sharon

## Appendix VI: Newspaper Articles on Feasibility Study Process

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BERKSHIRE RECORD • NOVEMBER 9, 2001

# Upper Housatonic National Heritage Area moves closer to reality next week

By Scott Neville

STOCKBRIDGE—The proposed Upper Housatonic National Heritage Area will take a major step toward reality next week, as National Park Service representatives hold a public meeting to determine what cultural and historical distinctions make the Berkshires worthy of the recognition.

At the meeting, scheduled for November 17 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Norman Rockwell Museum, Dr. James O'Connell, a community planner with the National Park Service's Boston office, will hear public comment to help him determine local features that may warrant National Heritage Area designation.

Currently, the Housatonic Heritage directors and officers are developing an Advisory Board of interested supporters from the more than two hundred official supporting organizations, businesses, individuals, and local government officials.

A tri-state effort to pass a National Heritage Area designation through the U.S. Congress has survived its initial stages, beginning with a survey by the National Park Service to research the importance of the Housatonic Valley

from Dalton through Warren, CT, National Heritage Chairman Ronald Jones said.

"We met last night with the Pittsfield Conservation Commission which voted unanimously to support us," he said. "We're up to almost 200 supporting organizations and individuals. So, everything is going well but we have a big task ahead of us."

O'Connell's study is under way, with visits to several key heritage sites, Jones said. His goal is to develop a first draft report by the spring.

The iron ore heritage from 1734-1923; past and current activity by writers, artists, and musicians; and scenic and recreational assets are all factors, Jones said. For nearly two centuries, the Housatonic Valley was the country's leading producer of iron for tools, railways, and weapons, providing 80 percent of the cannons for General George Washington's army, local historian Bernard Drew said.

The Housatonic Valley would be recognized in the same way as the current 23 other federally protected areas in the nation, including the Hudson Valley Heritage Area in NY and the Blackstone Valley Area in SE Massachusetts.

All of the towns and villages that border the valley, or whose waters feed into the Housatonic, have been approached and are eligible for this distinction if it passes through Congress. This would complement the 60 documented historic sites in Litchfield County and 75 in Berkshire County that are on the National Register of Historic Places, Drew said.

The South County towns included are: Alford, Egremont, Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Marlborough, Sheffield, Stockbridge, and West Stockbridge. Even some New York towns situated close to the Connecticut or Massachusetts lines, which now fit into the Hudson Valley Heritage Area, have been approached about the designation's benefits.

Once designated, a National Heritage Area enjoys almost complete liberty to choose what social, cultural, research, or preservation activities to support, and no restrictions are put on residents concerning home improvements, as sometimes happens with historical preservation efforts, Jones said.

By matching funds with other grant and revenue sources, the proposed Upper Housatonic Valley Heritage Area could promote the valley with brochures and workshops on historical and cultural topics, fund speakers in schools, or it could help restore an historic bridge, create woodland trails and small gardenscapes.

# Heritage Area Drive Gains Momentum

By RUTH EPSTEIN  
Editor

FALLS VILLAGE — The beauty and history of the Berkshire/Taconic region took center stage Tuesday when 15 people from the Northwest Corner and southern Berkshire County gathered in the South Canaan Meetinghouse to speak with Brenda Barrett. Ms. Barrett, whose office is in Washington, D.C., is the national coordinator for the National Park Service's of National Heritage Area program. Those attending the meeting support the creation of an Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area (UHVNHA).

When the designation is made by Congress, the area, which stretches from Lanesboro, Mass., to Kent, will receive federal funding and have access to expertise and other resources to preserve, protect and promote the Berkshire-Litchfield legacy.

During her brief talk, Ms. Barrett said that in beginning such a project, a shared consensus is important.

"It doesn't have to be one story," she said, and Tuesday's session proved her right. While those who came had a common desire to preserve the area, they also had a variety of resources to tout.

Sharon historian and geologist Ed Kirby mentioned the iron furnaces which once blackened the local skies but, long ago shut down, are being restored. "Iron is only one part of our heritage, but it is a key part," he told Ms. Barrett.

Elaine LaBella of the Housatonic Valley Association, with Mr. Kirby a director of Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area Inc., listed the the river, the mountains, the farms, waterpower and the iron industry and concluded, "Those are the things that bind us."

John Sisson of the New Marlborough Historical Society and a member of the UHVNHA advisory board, explained that while his town may be little known, it has a strong history of its own. There was major paper industry on the Konkapot River during the 19th century and, he re-

**When the designation is made by Congress, the area, which stretches from Lanesboro, Mass., to Kent, will receive federal funding and have access to expertise and other resources to preserve, protect and promote the Berkshire-Litchfield legacy**

counted, there was a man from New Marlborough who invented a means of folding newspapers that is still used today.

"If people in small towns all wrote their history and recorded important events, we'd have documentation that would be amazing to read," he said.

Wendy Murphy, a member of the Kent Conservation Commission, said she is interested in the educational history of the valley, noting that early law schools, missionary schools and women's schools were located in the area.

She also pointed out the large numbers of artists, writers and musicians who have lived in the region.

Jack Shanahan of the Connecticut Historical Commission emphasized the importance of "cross fertilization" in heritage areas.

"We're all trying to preserve what's special about our towns. I see this as bringing various groups together — bringing it all together and packaging it," he said.

He said encouraging tourism is part of the program, but "not so much as to overwhelm us."

Mary Lou Purcell of Falls Village told Ms. Barrett that most of the land in that town is owned either by the state or the Nature Conservancy.

"That has its problems because of taxes," she said, but added that because of its historical significance and scenic beauty, Falls Village is "very much part of the heritage area."

John Pawloski of the Connecticut Antique Machinery Association described the "mini Sturbridge" that organization oversees in Kent. Of the nine buildings on the property, seven are operational, displaying a wide variety of antique machines and tools.

Ms. Barrett said she was well aware of Connecticut's "amazing" industrial heritage, a little known fact to many.

Dorothy McCunn of Canaan spoke of that town's railroad legacy, its dairy farms and iron industry.

"We're more of the merchant town of the area," she said.

Norman Sills of Salisbury, who is active in maintaining the local section of the Appalachian Trail, spoke of that feature.

Ms. Barrett said she was very impressed with the parts of the area she had seen that day. She began her tour, in company of James O'Connell, National Park Service representative out of Boston who is coordinating the heritage area study, from Bradley Airport. She met with a group of UHVNHS board members and others at the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield. After a quick drive-by of some of the Lenox and Stockbridge, Mass., "cottages" and lunch at the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge she completed her visit in Falls Village. Ron Jones of Lakeville accompanied Ms. Barrett on much of the trek; he is chairman of UHVNHA.

"You have a beautiful living landscape," she remarked. "Driving through here is just fantastic. The architecture is great, but the hills, the valley, the river — they are really fantastic."

There are currently 23 heritage areas, with 14 new bills in Congress seeking designation. The first area named in 1984 was the Canal Corridor in Illinois and Michigan.

The Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area will be one of the first to undertake a feasibility study as part of the process.

Other Connecticut UHVNHA board members besides those mentioned are Toms Shachtman of Salisbury and Gabriel Seymour of Falls Village. There are also five Massachusetts board members.

# HOUSATONIC'S HERITAGE: *Designation effort focuses on river's role in region's history*

BY JOHN TOWNES

The assets of the Berkshires are often described by the traditional qualities that have been preserved, such the natural landscape and small-town character, rather than the qualities associated with change and progress.

Now, a preservation initiative is working to foster an appreciation of the innovation that is also a part of the region's identity.

"This area has a remarkable history, and it has long been a fertile area for innovation in many fields, including the nation's industrial progress," said Susan Easley, vice chairman of Housatonic Heritage, a community-based non-profit organization.

A primary goal of Housatonic Heritage is to promote the designation of the upper Housatonic River valley as a National Heritage Area by the National Park Service. The proposed Heritage area would encompass the Housatonic River corridor and 18 communities from the river's origins in Pittsfield and Dalton south to Litchfield, Conn.

Bolstering the region's connections with its past can also have contemporary benefits, believes Easley, who is also director of the Berkshire County Historical Society in Pittsfield.

"Identifying with this history of innovation can also help our present economy," said Easley. "It's not just tourism that benefits from this. Developing an understanding of our contributions can also be a great source of pride and inspiration to stimulate new innovation and economic progress here."

The National Park Service establishes a limited number of National Heritage Areas in regions with particular significance in the nation's history. The selections are based on extensive reviews and evaluations of several criteria, including a region's historic role and its geology, geography and other characteristics.

The Park Service describes the National Heritage Area program as "a vehicle for enhancing a region through public-private support for preservation and investment...to educate residents and visitors about the region, protect its natural and cultural heritage and enhance the economy."

Designated Heritage areas become eligible for some \$1 million in federal grants annually for 10 years. These are available to organizations and projects involved with historic preservation and education. It also opens up eligibility for other grants.

Easley emphasized that such a designation does not limit modern activity within the region.

"A Heritage area is not like a regulated historic district," she said. "There are no restrictions attached, and it has nothing to do with zoning or other local issues. It simply provides another resource for preservation and education projects that are supported by the community itself."

Easley added that the Housatonic Heritage project is intended to augment, not compete with, other preservation initiatives.



Susan Easley is among the proponents of an effort to designate the upper Housatonic River Valley as a National Heritage Area. Along with other benefits, the designation would open the door to substantial federal grant funds for preservation and education programs.

"There are many organizations working on preservation projects here already," she said. "The goal of establishing a National Heritage Area is to open up a potential new source of grants and support for these organizations. It is intended to help them do their work, not compete with them."

## Regional organization

Housatonic Heritage started as a local initiative in Lakeville, Conn., to focus attention on that community's history, including its role in the nation's early iron industry.

This grew into a larger community-based regional coalition that is working to promote designation of the entire upper Housatonic River valley and watershed as a National Heritage Area.

In late 2000, Congress approved a \$300,000 grant for a study of the two-state upper Housatonic Valley area. Dr. James O'Connell, a community planner with the Boston office of the National Park Service, is director of the study.

***"The literary and cultural history of this area is well known. But innovation has been a theme in many other activities as well."***

The evaluation process and the decision to designate a National Heritage Area takes

about three years. The review process is handled by the Park Service in conjunction with local proponents.

Housatonic Heritage currently has over one hundred official supporting organizations, businesses, individuals and local governments in Berkshire County and northwestern Connecticut.

Its chairman is Ronald Jones of Lakeville. Berkshire County officers and directors include Bernard Drew, Rachel Fletcher, Paul Ivory and Laurie Norton Moffatt.

If this Heritage area is created, the program would be overseen by the National Park Service, and administered by a local organization comprised of residents and representatives of organizations here.

O'Connell and members of Housatonic Heritage have been conducting research, contacting other organizations and holding public meetings to gather input and suggestions. A preliminary draft report for the Park Service is expected to be completed this spring, which will be presented to the public for further review and discussion later this year.

A final decision would likely be made within about two years, estimated Easley. Local input and support is a central part of this process, she emphasized.

"It's not just the Park Service coming in and deciding to create a Heritage area," she said. "The whole process is designed to be as public as possible. A Heritage area is con-

sidered a living entity, and people are the most important part of it. The Park Service wants to see if the public supports the idea."

## Regional themes

Part of the process of evaluating and establishing a National Heritage Area is identifying themes that reflect the particular

qualities and role of a region. While these are still being developed, basic themes that have been identified so far for the Housatonic corridor include the region's literary and artistic heritage, its natural and scenic qualities, and the diversity of people who have lived and worked here. Another facet is the region's role in the nation's industrial development.

While the extent that the region's natural qualities, small-town traditions and historic character are considered an important asset, said Eisley, the region's innovative contributions to the nation's progress are also being highlighted.

"That innovative spirit runs throughout our history in many fields," she said. "The literary and cultural history of this area is well known. But innovation has been a theme in many other activities as well."

For example, during the pre-Revolutionary War era, "our area was once known as the '14th colony' for its tradition of prickly independence from the remote political capitals," pointed out a recent newsletter from Housatonic Heritage. "Its Sheffield Resolves of 1773 was the first document to declare opposition to British rule." Berkshire residents also were involved in subsequent social and political movements, including W. E. B. DuBois, the controversial founder of the NAACP, who was from Great Barrington.

Berkshire County and northwest Connecticut also have been the site of contributions to the economic and industrial development of the nation.

The Housatonic valley had an important role in the nation's iron and steel industry between 1734 and the early 20th century.

With rich deposits of iron ore and limestone, forests for wood-fuel and waterpower, the region was a leading producer of iron in the nation's early years. This iron corridor was a significant segment of the region's economy.

Among these activities, the region produced the materials for a majority of cannons used in the Revolutionary War, and later the area was well-known for producing railroad wheels.

"There were many iron smelters from

Lanesboro down into Connecticut, and you can still find the remains of the early iron furnaces," noted Eisley.

The Housatonic region also made contributions to other industries.

What is believed to be the nation's first county agricultural fair was held in the early 19th century at Park Square in Pittsfield. The promoter of that event, a gentleman farmer named Elkanah Watkins, also was instrumental in introducing Merino sheep to America, which grazed on lands around the current Country Club of Pittsfield.

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***The nation's industrial activity has also had less favorable impacts on the Housatonic watershed.***

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Pittsfield was also the site of another important breakthrough in the development of the nation's textile industry around 1800, when Arthur Scholfield introduced the first wool-carting machine in Pittsfield.

This invention prepared the wool sheared from sheep for spinning in a way that made industrial textile production more practical in the United States. "This was an important advance that made it possible to develop a national textile industry," said Eisley.

Papermaking was another historic, as well as contemporary, economic mainstay, including Crane & Co. of Dalton, which has

manufactured the nation's currency paper throughout its history.

The Berkshires were also instrumental in the electrification of the nation. The first electric alternating-power transformer was built by William Stanley in Great Barrington. That town was also the first community to install electric streetlights.

Stanley's operations became the base of a major power-transformer manufacturing plant in Pittsfield, which subsequently became part of General Electric Co. In another breakthrough in Pittsfield, General Electric created the first artificial lightning, which was used to test machinery for safety and resistance to static electricity.

The nation's industrial activity has also had less favorable impacts on the Housatonic watershed. Pollution of the river has been a long-standing problem through the years, including the controversies over PCB contamination tied to former transformer operations at the Pittsfield GE plant.

Eisley noted that Housatonic Heritage and the potential for a National Heritage Area here are not directly related to the current efforts to clean up and restore the Housatonic River. "They are separate initiatives with different purposes," she said.

However, she added, Housatonic Heritage and the proponents of the river's cleanup have been in contact, and cleanup proponents are involved in the Housatonic Heritage project.

Eisley said additional public meetings will

be announced as the designation project move forward. Those who want more information about Housatonic Heritage may contact the organization at P.O. Box 498; Salisbury, Conn., 06068.

Four sites have also been designated as Heritage Area Information Centers, and information is available through contacts there. Berkshire locations include Arrowhead (where Eisley works) in Pittsfield and the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge. Other sites in Connecticut are the Academy Building of the Salisbury Association in Salisbury and the Sloane Stanley Museum in Kent. ♦

## Appendix VII: List of Preparers

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Edward Kirby, Historian  
Elaine Labella, Housatonic Valley Association  
Lion Miles, Historian  
Dennis Regan, Housatonic Valley Association  
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